

TWELVE YEARS OF PRISON LIFE

ULLASKAR DUTT

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The name of Babu Ullaskar Dutt is familiar to every educated household in India. Tried in the Alipur Bomb Case with Babu Barindra Kumar Ghose and others, he was with Mr. Ghose awarded the capital punishment at the Sessions Court at Alipur, on a charge of conspiracy and waging war against the King Emperor. On appeal to the Calcutta High Court, the sentence was revised and Mr. Dutt was transported for life to the Penal Settlement of the Andamans in the Bay of Bengal, towards the end of 1909. The interminable sufferings of the Bengal Political transportees in the Andamans have been described by Babu Barindra Kumar Ghose in his memorable book "The Tale of my Exile." In these pages Mr. Dutt has avoided any detailed description of the common experiences of the Political transportees and the main theme of this Vol. is the extraordinary spiritual experiences of the author during his incarceration. These experiences have a highly scientific value, and as such, we trust, the book will not fail to interest a large number of readers.

Mr. Dutt was released after the Great War, on account of a General Amnesty and he has since published a little volume in Bengali, recording his experiences in jail. The reading public of Bengal

gave Mr. Dutt's book a hearty reception and that book is shortly going to have a third edition. Thus encouraged Mr. Dutt was prevailed upon to permit an edition in English of his book. But the long sufferings in jail told so heavily upon the health of Mr. Dutt that he has not been able properly to revise the translation, nor has he been able to go through the proofs. We therefore crave the indulgence of our generous readers for the many shortcomings of this edition which we hope to rectify in the next.

B. BURMAN.

TWELVE YEARS OF PRISON LIFE.

PART I.

PRELIMINARY.

Before I proceed, I must ask my readers to excuse me for the deficiencies and inaccuracies of exposition and style that may appear to render my present work a bit insipid and uninteresting, as will only naturally be expected of a novice in the literary art, holding out his pen in public just for the first time in his life, ever so faltering and unsteady in his steps, even as a child will appear when he is learning how to stand and walk on his tiny pair of legs, leaving his habit of crawling on all fours. It is because of the very fascinating and interesting character of some of my experiences in prison that I venture to approach my generous readers, and not on the strength of my own literary abilities, which are undoubtedly nil and no better.

It was at the time when I was a student of

the City College, Calcutta, that I happened to get a taste of Politics for the first time in my life. I remember quite clearly the day when I went to hear a lecture delivered by Sj. Bepinchandra Pal at the Star Theatre Hall, and how he dwelt upon the subject of our National mendicancy and impressed the audience with his vivid imagination and logical reasonings. Hitherto our Congresses and Conferences, had spent over twenty to twenty-five years of our valuable time in fruitless attempts at gaining concessions from the Government by sending petitions and humiliating appeals. It was he who exhorted us to discard the idea as futile and take to self-help and self-assertion. "We seem to want", he said, "to gain our ends by disturbing John Bull in his sweet forgetfulness of slumber, nurtured and embelished by the folds of his cosy blankets, raising our moaning cries of woe and misery. But it was a thing that was never to be." Though perhaps this was the very first time that I went to hear a lecture, yet the idea caught my fancy and I do not seem to forget the incident even after the lapse of so many years. Previous to this I was never in the habit of attending lectures either Social or

Political, and even if I attended, I could scarcely be expected to understand what they meant. Now that I heard this lecture of Sj. Pal's, I seemed to get impressed with something that was not in me before and began to take an interest in the matter, so that I went to attend other lectures as well.

The next incident that I should like to make mention of here, is one of Rabi Baboo's Lectures. It was a paper read by Sj. Rabindra Nath Tagore, on Swadeshi Samaj, at the Minerva Theatre Hall. Unfortunately for me, I could not get a chance of attending the meeting, as there arose a scuffle between myself and some of the men guarding the entry gates. The Police intervened, and began to use their fists freely at those, that were standing near the gate, eager to enter, provided they got their chance. Enraged at the treatment they received at the hands of the Police, people began to throw brick-bats at them. The mounted police came running their horses in the very thick of the crowds, using their horse-whips right and left, and people began to disperse helter skelter in every direction. For about ten to fifteen minutes it was confusion and disorder all

around. I being the principal in the affray, was arrested and sent to the nearest police-station, with an escort of about half-a-dozen police men. On our way, as we began to near the Thana, the Police, finding me quite an unclaimed property, as it were, chose to satiate their pique, using their batons and fists as roughly and as rudely as they could from behind, making thereby the very best use of the short interval of time they had me at their disposal before handing me over to their superiors. The most funny part of the story lies in the fact that, as soon as I was presented before the Inspector in charge of the Station, those very policemen that beat me most mercilessly on the way, came to file charges against me first, alleging that I had assaulted them with my boots and fists; several of them actually showing to the Inspector spots in their person where I had given them blows and kicks. It all looked such a strange concoction, that I appeared quite dumb-founded before the Inspector. The Inspector however asked me if I could identify any of the men standing before me as having beaten or any way ill-treated me, on the way. I really didn't know what to say;

the men who ever assaulted me, did so only from behind and so gave me little or no opportunity at all for identifying their faces. As a result I had no other course left me but to answer the Inspector in the negative. In the meantime Sj. Pal and Dr. D. N. Moitra arrived at the police station, having heard the news of my arrest. Fortunately however, the Inspector happened to be an acquaintance of theirs and felt rather ill at ease when he saw those gentlemen come to my rescue. He was sorry, he said for what had happened but as the case had already been entered in the Diary, it could not be helped, that I should go to the Police Court once, next day. All this trouble could easily have been avoided, had they appeared a few minutes earlier. However, he assured the gentlemen that they should have no reason to be anxious about me; he himself would do the needful when the case came up for hearing. For the present I was given bail, so that I might not have to rot the whole night in the Police lock-up. Dr. Moitra stood bail for me and we all came out of the Thana together. I was at the time staying with my father, who was Professor of Agriculture in the Civil Engineer-

ing College, Shibpore, and had his quarters there, within the College compound. Instead of going to Shibpore that very night, I preferred to stop with Dr. Sundari Mohan Das's family, who was a particular friend of my father's. There, when I undressed myself for the night, it was found that the blows I had received at my back, had left marks that appeared as dark and swollen spots in several places. However it being a doctor's house, I had no difficulty in finding prompt medical aid; medicine was readily applied to the wounds and I felt little or no pain at all, before they got healed up. Next day also, I had had not much trouble in the police court; the trying Magistrate having agreed to hush up the case, without much questioning. Since then my notions as to the ways of our police and as a matter of consequence, those of the Government at their back, began to take a clear and distinct shape.

It was at about this time that the Bengal Partition came about, and there arose the tremendous popular agitation throughout the length and breadth of the whole of Bengal, rending the skies, as it were, with cries of "no partition" from all quarters. This was practi-

cally the first occasion in our lives, that gave us the chance to witness a scene, that will always be recorded in history in letters of gold, as the first awakening dawn of a new national consciousness, rich in all the gala robe and charming hue of an early morning sky.

Hitherto I was supposed only to be a very dull specimen of humanity, with scarcely any ideas as to what should be my future career. It was this popular movement which giving birth to the Swadeshi, sent a thrill through every pulsating heart in Bengal, and opened out all the secret channels of life that lay hidden under a cover of the sordid, selfish and ne'er-do-weal sort. It was this very wave of enthusiasms urging and sweeping through Bengal that gave us the uplift, and we felt as though we could do something; as the Poet sang,

“Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime;
And departing leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time.”

During the early stages of the movement, there occurred an incident, that played a very important part in bringing about a change in the

course of my studies at the time. After having got plucked once, I was preparing for the F. A. Examination in the Presidency College, a second time; I was only about four or five months in the college, and a very curious incident took place: Mr. Russel one of our professors gave a very strong report to the University against our Calcutta students, vilifying them, in the most objectionable language possible; depicting their morals as one of the most degrading on the face of the earth. Huge condemnation meetings began to be held at different places, protesting and passing votes of censure on the said professor for his foul and unjust criticism. England returned gentlemen began to divulge stories that they had heard regarding their overseas brethren, while prosecuting their studies there. All those went to show that our Calcutta students were in no way less moral, when compared to students of other countries. As a result, the whole Calcutta students' community began to fret and fume with rage against the Professor and it turned out so, that I could not hold myself quiet any longer and did something for which I had to leave college for good.

The Swadeshi was at the time running full

swing and at top-speed; I took it into my head to go over to Bombay and learn the textile industry. Accordingly I went and applied for admission in the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute there and having waited a few months, till the opening of the sessions, was taken in, after I had appeared in their preliminary test examination, that used to be held every year for the selection of candidates, fit for admission there. Before the advent of the Swadeshi Movement, I could scarcely be said to have found any taste in studies. It was the Swadeshi movement to which I must hold myself for ever indebted, for all the good things of life that fell on me, even me as I was, a stupid and good-for-nothing idler. It was this Swadeshi Movement that opened out my thought-channels, so to say, and I began to think seriously of life. I began to read books, such as Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero Worship", Joseph Mazzini's article on "Faith and Future", Bankimchandra's "Anushelan and Dharma Taṭwa"; books that by chance happened to be with me then, and found for the first time and much to my astonishment rather, that there could be things so enjoyable,

so interesting, and things so very maddening and rupturous at times, even in such a thing as study, the very study that once appeared to me an altogether tasteless, inodorous, colourless something, only the other day, while in college.

After having spent a few months in Bombay, I came home once during vacation time and found that the Bengal Provincial Conference was going to be held that year at Barisal. I chose at once to go there. It was that very Conference in which the local Police and the Magistrate made themselves conspicuous by their rowdyism and lawlessness in breaking up the processions most rudely with their "Lathis" and arresting Sir Surendra Nath even though it were for so short a time. The very cruel and merciless assault they made on the person of Sreejut Chittaranjan Guha Thakurta, I saw with mine own eyes, and to add to it all, I myself did not escape the favour of a blow from one of their regulation "lathis". All those ill-treatments received at the hands of the high-handed, servants of the State, servants in name, but tyrants in deed, began to tell on our minds with such ready effect that it became impossible for us to remain indifferent any more. A deter-

mined stand had to be made somehow, and we began seriously to think as to what should be the method we were to follow.

The well-known Vernacular Weekly, "Yugantar", now extinct, was started at about this time, and turned out to be the boldest, the most intelligent and the most daring exponent of the popular cause; for which endeavour quite a number of its editors and printers, beginning with Babu Bhupendra Nath Dutt, brother to the late Swami Vivekananda had to go to jail. In those days of the infant Swadeshi, jail-going for the vindication of the rights of man, was a thing almost unknown in our national history, and we must not forget to pay our respects to the first martyrs that ventured to break open, the first barrier, that stood between the people and their self-realisation. It was this very enthusiastic "fire-brand" Yugantar, that appeared as a God-send for Young Bengal, and helped to coerce all the potent forces then at work. As a result we found it a most valuable aid to developing our crude imagination and unformed ideas, directing them in the most definite and readily effective channels. Moreover, the very fiery and

high pitched preorations in those days, of Sree-jut Bēpin Chandra Pal and the very timely and inspiring songs of our poet Rabindranath, sounded like a trumpet call for Young Bengal, and filled the youthful minds with a passionate and patriotic fervour almost unparalleled in pages of history all the world over.

At the close of the vacation period, I returned to Bombay, but the whirr-r-r of the mill machinery seemed to tell on my nerves so very badly, that it became almost impossible for me to attend to their working, and I had to return home seriously ill, suffering from liver complaints and jaundice. For several months together I had to be under medical treatment and with the patient care and loving kindness of the family circle, began gradually to recover. As soon as I felt somewhat better, I had to be on the look-out for some effective plan of action, such as would suit me best under the present circumstances. I found, that there was a splendid opportunity before me, should I but choose to take advantage of it. "The whole country appeared to be in a huge state of unrest, and it was just the time when people would eagerly accept the revolutionary

creed, if we could give it a turn in that direction. Fortunately for me however the Civil Engineering College was only a stone's-throw, from where we stayed and offered me every chance of getting books and things from there. There was a good library and a fairly equipped laboratory; so I thought that I might easily avail myself of this situation and turn it to good use. The very first thing that appeared most indispensable to the revolutionist, was the manufacture of explosives; if I should succeed, I thought, in doing that, I would easily be able to enter one of the secret societies, that we heard were growing in the country and work with them. With this for my object I gave up the idea of going back to Bombay, where I could not possibly escape the jarring effects, that I had once suffered from. Very soon I succeeded in some of my experiments and with them as my asset, I approached a society and was readily taken in.

The rest of the story has already appeared in Brain Babu's "Dwipantarar Katha" now translated in English, entitled "The tale of my exile" and Upen Babu's "Nirbashiter Atma Katha" in Bengali and is still appearing in the columns of "The Bijalee" under headings entitl-

ed "Dwipentarar Pathe" etc. So I would rather not vex my readers with a story twice told and incur their displeasure. However though all our jail experiences are the same in their general aspects, there is a good deal of difference in respect to the particular, specially my own individual experiences. Those of my experiences that I intend here to deal with, being of a nature so very different from our ordinary experiences of every day life, it seems necessary that I should make a brief survey of them, if not to explain at least to understand what they mean, and their significance in relation to our human needs.

As a rule we experience our phenomenal world only and talk of the noumenal, by way of antithesis and no more. That there could be a noumenal world, as real and as convincing, as our phenomenal, we have scarcely any idea, and yet if we analyse our phenomena we have but only to fall back upon noumena: there is no other go. In that case could we not try, if we could see through noumena and arrive at something that we could ponder over and understand, same as we do our phenomena? If we succeed, then certainly I should say, we shall enlarge

our scope of vision into the nature of things and shall find ourselves the better equipped for grappling with the problems of life that face us every day and in every phase of existence. If for instance we admit that extremes meet at Infinity, then does it not follow that the very extreme of phenomena should be but noumena in another name, and so also vice versa? Let us call phenomena the positive mode of perception and noumena the negative. For arguments sake let us assume two individuals starting from the same point, but on opposite directions; one in search of the positive, or phenomena and the other the negative, or noumena. One for instance takes up for his theme a particular phenomenon and calls it "light", the other then goes and takes up, what he finds as the absence of light, and calls it "darkness". In the same way as the one perceives shades and grades of light, the other perceives shades and grades of darkness. So, it may follow that, given perception as one—the same percept will be expressed in terms of "light" by the one, whereas by the other it will be expressed in terms of "darkness". If, for instance, A goes and finds in his room a new lamp burning, he compares

the brightness of his flame with his unit of measurement, the candle, and arrives at a figure say 16; he calls the Light a 16 candle-power light. The other then comes to the same room and finds that his room appears much less dark and so expresses his experience as so many candle-power less dark, or in other words, he expresses it as minus sixteen candle-power "darkness". From the above example it appears quite plain that the two persons A and B find themselves quite oppositely polarised with regard to their visual sense perceptions. If we compare the function of our eyes with that of the owl this will appear just to be the case.

या निशा सर्वं भूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी
यस्यां जगति भूतानि सी निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥

Bhagwat Gita.

"What is night to the ordinary run of people is but day to the "mystic Rishi", and he wakes; that which is day time to people in general is but same as night for the Rishi. If we carry this analogy further, I think it will apply as equally true with regard to the phenomenal and the noumenal, the manifest and the

unmanifest, the visible and the invisible worlds that surround us on all sides and from all directions. Under ordinary circumstances the manifest or the phenomenal, occupies almost the whole or say ninety-nine per cent of our conscious existence leaving only the residuum one per cent or almost a negligible quantity, merely to suggest the idea of the noumenal or the unmanifest by way of antithesis. If instead, by virtue of our wilful exertions to pierce through the veil of darkness that enshrouds noumena, or naturally by way of the return circuit in the causal chain, things begin to appear in their reverse order, we would begin to experience more and more of the noumenal with less and less of the phenomenal as we proceeded.

With these few preliminary remarks, let us now proceed with our story. Of course, such stories or stories of a like nature we find in plenty when we refer to our epics and the ancient Puranas. But those stories that we come across there, could scarcely be said to possess any explanations as to their nature and cause. They seem to appear as mere stories only of a fictitious or supernormal type, with perhaps a poetic, or at best, a moral idea at their base.

Should this suffice, may I ask, for an explanation, in these days of scientific and intellectual advancement? Certainly not. It is for this reason only that I intend to place before my readers facts from my own personal experience, sifted and arranged, with a view to arrive at a reasonable explanation as to their nature and cause. How far I shall succeed is quite another matter and it is for my readers to judge. Even if the explanation appear quite vague and incomplete; facts, there could be no denying them; given those, half the work is done and my thoughtful readers can at any time ponder them and make up for all the deficiencies that may appear to render my explanation hollow.

I.

After the passing of the sentence of "death" on myself and Barinda (Sj. Barindra Kumar Ghose) at the Alipore Sessions Court, we were both placed in two condemned cells side by side; the very first two of a row known by the name of the "44 cells". When they asked me whether I should like to appeal to the High Court for a further trial or not, I at first said "No; how could I appeal to a court

of Justice, whose very authority to try we did not admit?" I continued in this state of mind for some time; but Barinda from my next cell, began to argue with me by means of ticks and thumps on the adjacent wall common to us both saying that it would not be right on my part not to appeal, while all the others did. The jail authorities having disallowed all free communication amongst ourselves, we had to resort to this under-hand trick, privately arranging for a code of signs that could only be understood by ourselves, so that the authorities could never detect what consultations went on amongst us politicals. Barinda said that it was he only, that was mostly to be held responsible for whatever had transpired, and it would be folly on my part if I were to place a single more straw, over and above what was already lying on his back, so that it came almost to the breaking point. Was it not my duty he said to sign the appeal form, in spite of the moral objection that lay behind the question, considering the relief he would feel when he came to find that there was to be at least one precious life less lost out of the total? Moreover my parents and people at home began to try all possible means

in order to persuade me to make my appeal. All those persuasions from different quarters, began to tell on my mind and by and by seemed to change my conviction in their favour. By and by I began to doubt my position, and asked myself whether it would be right on my part not to appeal, ignoring all the earnest entreaties from very nearest and dearest; people that loved me so much and for whom I had my very best regards. Even if I laid utmost stress on the moral bearing of the question and accepted the gallows, would people understand me according to my lights? I doubted: society as it was then constituted scarcely seemed to possess elements such as would have thought with me. I gave in, called the European Warder and told him that I wanted to make my appeal. In the meantime Sreejot Sarat Chandra Sen, Vakil, High Court and my uncle Dr. Mohendra Chandra Nundi appeared one morning before my cell, produced an appeal form, and wanted me to sign. They gave me pen and ink, and I signed. The next day or the day after, I could not be definite, the very same persons came to my cell once again, produced the very same kind of an appeal form

and wanted me to sign. 'What do you mean?' I said—'Did I not sign the appeal form the other day? Why do you want me to sign it again?' They seemed not to understand my meaning and for a time looked quite blank at me. 'To whom did you give the signed appeal form?' they asked. 'To you'—I said—'whom else?' It all looked such a strange mystery! They had never come to me with any appeal form before, they said, how could I have signed it? However it was useless wasting time over a matter that could not be explained. I must sign the form they brought with them and be done with it. I did accordingly, and they went away satisfied. However I must tell my readers here that although Sreejut Sen and my uncle denied that they had ever before come to me with any appeal form, it seemed impossible for me to believe what they said; because in that case I should have had to disbelieve mine own eyes, and who could do that? So in order to make amends for the apparent contradiction between us, I took their denial for a joke only that I thought Sarat Babu was playing with me for fun's sake. Never for a moment did it occur

to me then that there could be such a thing as an unseen world playing hide-and-seek with us poor mortals of this mutable earth. By and by in Jail life as I began to experience incident after incident of a similar nature, I came to realize this fact and began gradually to form clearer and clearer notions regarding the nature of such happenings.

If we analyse the forces that determine our movements either in society or in politics, we find, that they follow certain definite rules or laws. From the very smallest unit of an individual home up to the very largest corporate body of a nation, nay, even humanity itself, we fall into larger and larger grooves, that determine and give shape to our life's activities. Leaving aside questions of humanity, which is rather too vast a subject for ordinary people to understand, I think politics plays the most important part in the most vital problems of life that concern a small people or even the largest corporate body. That being so, it follows as a matter of course that this politics should mean nothing other than the very largest aggregate of forces that could hold sway over our destinies, encrusted within the very hardest adamantine outer wall, that

should keep us within its specified bounds. The very least trespass beyond this outer wall, means a total upset of the existing order of things; if good, the very maximum of good possible, if evil, the very maximum of evil also.

. As in the life of an individual or a society we come across periods of transition and change, so also with a whole people or a nation. During such periods of transitional change, questions of importance arise and with such tremendous force, as to threaten with destruction even the very outer wall itself. The very giddy heights from which such questions demand their solution, seem to affect not only the nation by itself, but humanity in general and do not stop even there, they seem even to reach the very border-lands of Creation and affect the Celestials in their relative movements. Those are the waves I think, that are capable of waking Sree Bhagaban or Moha Vishnu Himself and do wake him up at times, from His Rip-van-Winkle sleep in the Karana-Saleelam or the Causal Waters. As He i.e. the Logos or Ishwara wakes and directs His attention towards the affairs of mortal man, it becomes necessary at times to rise above the general laws of a slow and gradual

process of evolution and have recourse to more direct and special methods of intervention. It is, I think, as a result of one of those special processes that we come occasionally across such vivid and materialised manifestations of the Divinity. There is one peculiar feature in these manifestations to which I should like to draw my reader's attention and that is, their very transient and short lived character. Just at the time an incident like this is taking place, you are so overpowered and carried away by it, that do all you can, you cannot but imagine that the incident is something quite real, something that is happening only in the natural course of events and not otherwise. Moreover, you are so liable to forget every thing relative to the incident, the moment it is over, that it seems such a magic, that a manifestation so vivid and material, could have been swept clean out of your memory in a trice. Such at least was the case with me, during the early stages of my experiences in these lines.

In making the above remarks, the only object I have in view, is to place before my readers a whole series of similar experiences, keeping in view, as far as possible, their chronological order of recurrence, and if possible, to

offer an explanation, however defective, according to my own lights.

Of course, every one will admit that experiences such as these could not possibly be met with every now and again; nor are they common incidents in every-day life; and to arrive at a general conclusion from them *i.e.* facts so rare and uncommon, must necessarily be very difficult at the outset. However, I shall consider myself fortunate if I find that in writing this book I have been able to attract the attention of thoughtful readers or persons such as have had similar experiences in their own lives, and are eager to enter into discussions regarding the laws or the cause that underlie such phenomena.

II.

Now let us proceed with our story. After the commutation of the sentence of "death" on myself and Barinda (Sj. Barindra K. Ghose) by the High Court into transportation for life we were sent away to the Andamans, on board S. S. "Maharaja" together with Hemda (Sj. Hem Chandra Das), Bibhuti, Indu Bhushan, Hrishikesh, and Abinash, in the first batch,

others having followed some time later. We made quite a jolly lot of exiles adrift and enjoyed full well the sea trip that happened to have been the very first of its kind in the case of most, excepting Hemda, who had been to foreign countries before, and also Barinda in a way, who was born at sea while his parents were on their way to England, but brought back to India, while he was only a year old child.

On the third day of our journey as the boat reached Port Blair, the Capital of the Andamans, the Civil Surgeon, the Jailor and some of the Overseers, came to inspect the heterogeneous cargo that we made, along with the other transported criminals from different parts of India. When they had done so, it was ordered, that the whole of our lot, i.e., the political prisoners should be sent away separately to the Central Jail, direct, instead of to the Segregation camp, along with the rest of the transportees, as was the usual practice, whenever any fresh prisoners from India arrived. We were sent accordingly to the above jail called the "Cellular Jail"; a towering structure, built on the top of a hill, standing out most conspicuous in its grim solitude as the only massive brick-

work in all the Andaman's. From the nature of its construction, one could easily infer, that it was erected with the double purpose of a prison and a fort.

According to the usual practice transported prisoners from India had to be kept in the above jail, for a period not exceeding six months, or one year at most, under observation. On expiry of that term, they were sent away to different stations within the settlement to work there, under convict supervision. There were wooden barracks erected all over the islands, where they were lodged at night. What made the authorities change their course in our case, God alone knows; they seemed to look upon us with worse suspicion than that with which one would look upon a "murderer or a dacoit," nay even a tiger or a wolf. It was therefore it seems that they kept us confined in jail "until further orders," which proved something like two years and a half in our case. Not only this, they made us do the very worst kind of hard labour they had in store for a convict prisoner there; beginning with coir pounding and ending in the oil mills.

Apart from the hand oil-mills, that we

usually find in our Indian jails, they had a very peculiar kind of an oil mill, which I think will make quite a first-class exhibit, if brought out and shown in one of our big public "fairs". The way this curious piece of apparatus had to be dragged, seems most wonderful, and indeed "Passeth all understanding". In our ordinary bullock-driven indigenous oil mills, the quantity of mustard oil that a bullock could give, going round and round the whole day, does not amount to any thing more than eight seers or sixteen pounds at most; whereas, the quantity we had to give, was fixed at one maund or eighty pounds per diem; of course allowing for all the difference that makes between mustard and cocoanut, in their rate of flow, as we had only to give cocoanut oil from that big oil mill.

There was a big cauldron in the centre, something like the witches' cauldron of Shakespeare's; dried cocoanut had to be poured into it by the sackfuls and three men had to drag the iron cross-bar that turned the big cast-iron pestle in the central hollow of the cauldron, crushing thereby the pieces of cocoanut that came under its heavy pressure. From morning till evening excepting the few minutes that had

to be spent for the taking of meals, those three men had to drag that iron thing, going round and round, not like the bullock at its slow and easy-going pace, but like a horse, literally running all the time, without halt or stoppage, for fear of getting short task in the evening.

If by chance one amongst the three got tired and laged behind, there was the petty officer watching, with his bludgeon held ready, a moment more and it would come down on the poor fellow's back, with a thirty pound crash like the "bolt from the blue". Should this not suffice for a stimulant, there was to be added some perfectly efficient treatment, that the poor fellow could "never have yet dreamt of". I have myself witnessed a case in which they got a convict tied hand and foot to the cross bar, while the others dragged, simply because he happened to lag behind a little and could not keep pace with them. It was indeed a most pitiable scene to witness, thus a human being, treated by his fellow human beings, his whole body scratched and bleeding all the while, as he had to go rubbing and scrubbing against the floor in spite of him-

self. This is indeed the very type that goes to prove what Wordsworth wrote in his memorable lines "And much it grieved my heart to think, What man has made of man", even in these much vaunted days of our Twentieth Century Civilisation. As for myself when I was given to work in the above kind of an oil mill, my readers can well imagine what my condition appeared to be. I really didn't know how the days passed followed by the nights and so on, over and over again. So complete was the exhaustion that I felt after each day's labour, that when I went to my cell in the evening at last, it appeared almost doubtful as to whether I should rise again next morning to see the dawn of day, once more to get myself yoked to my harness as before and go through the self-same drudgery. They seemed to appear quite unmoved by our troubles and would show us no consideration as literate people, unused from childhood to any kind of hard manual labour. However we argued,—let us try to pull on with whatever work they choose to give us, as long as our health permits, we shall know what course to adopt by and by.

The first six months passed in this way ;

all the other prisoners that came by the same boat with us from Calcutta got their release from jail, and went outside but no orders for us; one year passed, two years passed, how many fresh batches of new-comers arrived and duly went out at the end of their specified terms but our fate remained the same. Committee after committee sat and we watched the issues with bated breath and eager expectations, all to no purpose. Tired at last, as we came almost to the end of our tether, waiting and waiting, and waiting, there came the news one fine morning, that the jail authorities had received orders relating to our transfer to the settlements. We gathered together all our belongings, a few books, some clothes, the iron cup and plate, the only ones that we had the right to call ourselves the proud proprietors of at the time, and made for the gates. We waited there till the official business arrangements regarding our transfer to the settlements, had to be gone through; as soon as the necessary arrangements were complete, the gates opened, and we came out, all together, shouting and laughing, and gesticulating, to our hearts' content, only to fall

from the frying pan to the fire, once more, which fact we did not then realise.

III.

They divided our number into two halves, one meant for the eastern district of Port Blair, where the big Cellular Jail also was situated, and the other for the Western district, of which an island known by the name of Viper Island stood for its head-quarters. Those that were meant to be placed in the Western district had to separate from the others and cross over to Viper, by means of a ferry boat, plied by five or six convicts employed for the purpose. On our way we were told to go to the ration stores, where we were given raw ration for one meal each, so that when we reached our respective stations, we might get cooked ones instead. According to directions received at the jail gate my station fell on the Western side, so that our lot embarked on the ferry boat and crossed over to Viper. It took us more than an hour to cross, so that by the time we reached the head-quarters of our district, it was wellnigh mid day.

For myself I was given a guide, to accom-

pany me right up to Port Mouat, the name of the station where I was to be placed. All the rest of my fellow brethren had to go to different other stations with strict injunctions not to meet amongst themselves. As I proceeded for some distance with my guide, we came to a small village, where the guide wanted me to stop for a little while, which I did, and the man began to talk to an old man, that I found was there, standing on the main road. Here again the Super-natural once more. The old man to whom my guide was talking happened to be a Bengalee Mahomedan, hailing from Eastern Bengal, most probably from Tipperah my own district or from Mymensing, an adjacent one; at least so I inferred from his tone and dialectical pronunciation. He was a 'Ticket of leave settled in that village, and naturally enough I felt very glad indeed to meet one who spoke my own tongue and my dialect even in such a far and out-of-the-way place, as an Andaman Village.

All on a sudden as the guide was talking to the said Mahomedan, I seemed to hear a very familiar voice coming from somewhere near about. I looked around and was quite amazed

to find that the voice came from one of the huts near by, and wonder of wonders!!! I saw quite clearly and distinctly the figure of one for whom I had a very warm corner in the regions of my heart. The very strangest part of it all was the fact that though the voice came from somewhere inside the hut, yet the form that I saw, appeared as clear as daylight to me, as if the thatch walls of the hut never existed or even if they did exist, was no barrier to her being seen from where she stood. The phenomenon seems to resemble in many respects what is known as Röntgen's X-ray projections. My readers can well imagine the state of my feelings at the time; I was simply stupefied so to say, and did not know how to adjust myself to the state of things I was made to face. What, of all the places on earth, to meet her in a convict hut like this, in an Andaman village!!! By Jove! who could have thought, nay even dreamed of such a thing as that? However I argued—she must have run away from her home, leaving father, mother, and all her relations, unable to bear the distance, circumstances had placed between us, and has chosen to follow me even here, managing somehow to board in

lodge with this old Bengalee ticket-of-leave. It is quite plain from the above, to my readers I think, that I took this appearance of one whom I held so dear to my heart, to mean an actual fact only, that had taken place in the natural course of events. I did not in the least suspect then, that there was anything supernatural in the occurrence; neither could I for all the world believe that there could be anything supernatural in an object so vivid and material. However, it was getting late and there was no time for me to engage in a lover's quarrel with her there, for her hasty and indiscrete venture. They wanted me to proceed and I had to take leave of her in a half-rain, half-sunshine sort of a mood. But strange again to say that no sooner did we leave the place and began to proceed in the direction of my destination, all recollections regarding the incident vanished as by magic and I seemed not to remember anything at all of her coming to the Andamans!!

I was fortunate rather I should say, when I look back at the incident; in so far as my memory was concerned; because if instead of forgetting everything relative to the incident then and there, it happened to persist and haunt

my memory, all the while, what unforeseen calamities might not have befallen me, chasing in my mad frenzy a thing so delusive and ultramundane, a will-o'-the-wisp of some unknown world. From the above occurrence, I am inclined to infer that there must be certain definite rules or laws regulating the movements and conduct of the Supernals, so that the forces that are working there, may not transgress their specified limits; or else confusion and chaos only would have been the outcome of their capricious and indiscriminate interference, off and on, in matters not strictly within their province.

Our world and theirs are two distinctly separate spheres, with a dielectric partition between them, that does not allow of any easy interpenetration. It is because of this dielectric difference, that it has become possible for both parties to maintain their respective identities, keeping intact their distinctive features on either side of existence.

Though however there is this line of demarcation between the two worlds, for all practical purposes, we must not forget at the same time, that there is a synthetic principle that runs

through and through, combining into a single whole all the different systems that may exist on either side of the river Lethe. The laws that govern the very lowest strata of life, merge gradually into higher and higher ones, as we rise to higher and higher rungs in the evolutionary ladder. It is at the meeting point of two distinct strata that doubts arise, as to which is which, and it becomes difficult to distinguish between stratum and stratum layer and layer, genus and genus, species and species. Of the tad-pole of the ponds, when it is just coming out as a frog, it may be questioned whether it is a tadpole or a frog, but not so when fully developed. Such also happens with us, when we are passing through periods of transition and change, whether as individuals, or societies, or even as an entire people and it becomes difficult to anticipate the lines of procedure with regard to such, so that in the very extreme of cases, the doubt seems to reach the very far end of creation, and disturbs the partition line that exists between the earthly and the unearthly, the manifest and the unmanifest, the visible and the invisible around us.

IV:

However it is not yet time for me to enter into a thorough analysis and a systematic discourse relating to those super natural phenomena, in order to ascertain more clearly and definitely their nature and substance. This is only the beginning of a series of experiences altogether on a new line, specially when they appear so very delusive and transient in their effects on us, it will not be advisable I think at this early stage, to discuss in detail and generalise upon their laws and causes. As they will begin gradually to impress upon our memory more and more by their repeated appearance and disappearance, it will become easier I think for us to get a clearer insight into their inner mysteries.

Now to resume our story :—After I had reached Port Mouat, that evening, they gave me to lodge in one of their wooden houses, together with their other criminals stationed there. They gave me to break stones and pave roads, at first, just as the others did, and I undertook to do whatever work they gave, quite gladly and willingly. Port Mouat was only a very small

station, with accommodations for not more than forty or fifty men at best and rather out of the way, from the main thorough fares, so that it appeared quite a solitary nook in the midst of the jungles around, where one could well enjoy a secluded life, free from all the troubles and turmoils of a busy work-a-day world. It was full of Nature's most exquisite works of art, rich fields, wild forests, rugged hills, all full of that tropical vegetation, to which there could be no parallel all the world over.

During my stay there, one morning, we were told that the Bengalee Ast. Surgeon of our District was coming that day to visit our station. We had to dress ourselves in clean clothes accordingly and stand on parade for him, instead of going to work as usual. We had not been waiting for long and some one raised the cry that he was coming. The very next moment we saw at a distance, two Bengalee gentlemen on a rick-shaw, drawn by two or three convicts, coming towards us. As the conveyance drew near, they alighted and went round the file as was their wont, without asking anybody anything in particular on the way, but when they came in front of me, they stopped, and one of

them began to ask me questions as to how it was that I had to come to the Andamans and so on. They went even so far as to suggest to me certain particulars regarding my future. Out of all that they said I remember particularly the details of an incident that they said, was going to happen shortly, and that was this :—I would receive a letter from the girl I loved, of whom I made mention once, some time before, containing amongst other things, some lines in particular which they read out to me quite distinctly. I should like to quote the lines here, translated into English from the original in Bengalee, for my reader's perusal, as I happen to remember the lines word for word, even now quite clearly. They are "Your very own dear sister Putu Rani and Karuna Kana (my niece) two pretty blossoms from the "garden of Heaven" have gone back to their garden, to flower there". Saying all this the gentlemen prepared to leave and proceeded just in the opposite direction from which they came, Strange to say, that I actually received such a letter, some ten or fifteen days later, and found much to astonishment, that it contained amongst other things, that very ill

fated news, written exactly in the language mentioned above.

Just a few minutes after those gentlemen had left, there came a second rickshaw, all to my bewilderment and surprise, exactly in the same way as the first and with the very same persons or rather a very similar couple. These arrivals also went round our file, but meant business only and no nonsense. They asked me a few questions as to how I liked the place, and the work they gave me to do and so forth, giving me the assurance that whenever I should find myself in any difficulty regarding men and things there, they would try to help me as best as lay in their power to help, if only I should take the trouble to inform them. They asked the jamadar next, whether there were any cocoanuts to be had there, to which the jamadar replied "Yes" and brought some, cut open their tops and gave them to drink. After having cooled their heated pouch on plenty of cocoanut milk, they drove back in the direction from which they had come.

I really did not know to make any head or tail out of this business and looked quite the fool that I was, for some time. Previous to

this my readers will remember, there occurred an incident very similar in nature, while I was in Alipore jail, with regard to the appearance of Sj. Sarat Chandra Sen and my uncle Dr. M. C. Nundy. But there the time interval between the apparitional and real visits having been more than a day at least, I could quite easily have been deluded to believe, that the same persons came to visit me twice, on matters of business; so that I had little or no reason to suspect anything out of the ordinary there. But here in the present case the question seemed very different, inasmuch as the interval between the two visits, was so short, that there could be no room for any the smallest doubts as to the super natural character of one of the visits. Moreover, it will be remembered that the first pair of visitors came from one direction and left by the other; so that when the second pair arrived from the very same direction from which the first pair had come and within such a short interval of time, how could one have believed both pairs to have been the same, though so much alike in every detail of dress, complexion and features? The road too was not one that circled round within any very

reasonable distance so as to make it possible for the first pair to take a circuit twice within the very short time that separated the two visits.

So I should say that this was practically the first occasion in the series, when it was made quite clear to me that there could be an unseen world playing about us unnoticed, so as occasionally to confound us poor mortals, with its sudden and startling materialisations. But though this was so to say my first initiation, practically, and I came to believe in the existence of a mysterious world, just for the first time in my life it could not as yet be said of me that I quite understood their meaning and significance in relation to our earthly life. This time also the incident could not make any very lasting impression on my memory, even though the two visits were so vividly contrasted on the mind screen, as one following the other within such a short interval of time; and from this my readers will, I think, be able get an idea as to how sudden and transient could be the effects of those Supernatural manifestations, on our normally constituted memory. They seem only to affect a particular portion of our brain, not

affected during our waking states, as in the case of hypnosis.

Those of my readers that have read books on hypnotism, know full well, that when a subject is hypnotised, he may if suggested by the operator, perform feats, almost Super-human in character, as if quite a different man from what he had been during his waking state; and yet when he is made to wake from his hypnotic sleep he seems not to remember anything at all of what he was doing only a few minutes ago. But it will be noticed, strangely enough, that if he were hypnotised a second time, and a third and so forth and asked as to what he had seen and done during his previous states of hypnosis, it will be found that he could remember each time all that had happened during previous such state or states in every minute detail. All this goes to prove quite clearly that during hypnosis, only a particular part of the subject's brain is affected and its memory seems to link together all objects of consciousness impressed upon it during previous such state or states. The portion of the brain that is affected during our waking states seems to have no connection with the one that is affected during

hypnosis; they seem to be separated by some sort of an insulating line or partition. The super natural phenomena I have referred to, seem to bear the same sort of relation to our waking consciousness as those under hypnosis, and are liable to be forgotten entirely, during normal waking states; at least such happened to be the case with me during the earlier stages of my experiences on these lines. But by and by as instances began to multiply, the insulating line seemed gradually to wear out, and there appeared lines of communication joining the two hitherto separated regions of the brain, enabling me thereby to remember quite clearly the whole series of my super natural experiences, reflected on the mind-screen, as on a mirror even during normal states of waking consciousness. It is because of this only, that it has become possible for me to write in detail, all that I did experience regarding the super natural, while undergoing my term of 'Life sentence'.

As usual, I soon busied myself with my daily routine of work *i.e.* 'stone breaking, road metaling etc, and ceased to remember anything regarding the super natural for some time to come. . I had not been in Port Mouat for very

long, before I received an order, directing me to change my station to Dundas Pt. a place within the same district and not many miles from Port Mouat. I had to shift bag and baggage accordingly and come over to my new residence.

V.

This Dundas Point, I found, was a much bigger place than the one I had left, with accommodations for not less than three to four hundred men at the very least. There was a huge brick field, and a couple of brick furnaces, that worked for about three months in the year; for which time, people from different parts of the settlements had to be sent there to work in brick-making. Though for the rest of the year round, the place had nothing much of importance to talk of there, and looked quite forsaken and desolate, yet during the brick-making seasons, it turned out to be one of the most important centres of work, and people gathered together in such numbers as to give to the place almost the appearance of a noisy bustling bazaar.

The work that they gave me there at first, proved a very tiresome one, and consisted in carrying clay bricks, three at a time, on a plank of wood, from the cutter, as they were being cut out by him in the moulds, to the layer or the man that laid them out in the sun for drying. As a result I had to keep running from early morning till one or two o'clock in the afternoon, without stoppage, until the requisite number fixed for a day's task had all been laid out.

We could only avail ourselves of a very short respite for our mid-day meal and had to resume work as soon as possible. Considering the tedious and fatiguing nature of some of the functions of work in the brick fields, they made an extra allowance of one or two pints of milk per head, for some of the working men, and the work of runner, happened to be one.

Ordinarily speaking, it was the practice amongst the workmen whenever they happened to get any extras, "to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's" i.e., to give away what extra milk they got, to the supervising Tindale or petty officer, as a token of their most undeniable faith and loyalty, in order to pacify and carry favour with them. Unfortunately,

however, it did not even for once occur to me at first, that the Tindale or the petty officer, was casting eager and covetous glances at my bowl. Moreover, it was no easy task for one like me to run the whole day carrying brick-loads in the sun; and the pint of milk that I got for my labours, I considered as perfectly well earned, so that there could be none fitter than myself to drink it—be he a Lord or be he a king—parched and dry as I felt, running for so many hours in the scorching mid-day sun. The man in charge, after days of eager and fruitless expectation found that it was all to no purpose; every time that I got my milk, I finished the whole pint, looking neither this way nor that, caring not even for a single soul in all this wide wide world; what was the use, he thought, putting me in for such work as that? And so he changed me to some other work for which there was no milk allowance sanctioned. It was foolish of him, perhaps he thought, not to have known of my intentions before, else there would have been no chance of his missing his royalty for so many previous days of his work regime, had he but put some other man in, for that work, from the very beginning.

The next work that I was given turned out to be somewhat less fatiguing, as it had to be done mostly under shade and not in the scorching mid-day sun. The work consisted in carrying mud-balls, the size of a foot ball each time from the mud-grinding mills, and making a heap or mound, just by the side of the cutter or mistry, that cut out the bricks in the moulds. Working in mud the whole day, we looked the very picture of a dirty lot of swine, squeaking and wallowing in filth and mire, ever so happy in their unenviable field of sport.

Here too it will not be quite out of place to mention that our Assistant Surgeon, whose acquaintance we made in Port Mouat, came to visit us once more in Dundas' Point. We had to sit in file as usual for him and when he came and went round on his duty of inspection, he seemed rather in a hurry and would not stop anywhere till he came near me. As soon as he saw me, he called and drew me along with him, as if the only object of his coming to inspect the station was to see me, all else meaning nothing but a mere show of official duty. As we walked for some distance together, he told me that he would show me some fun and asked

one of the men standing, whether he knew any "Vidya" i.e. supernatural art; the man a Tindale for the station having answered him in the affirmative, our doctor wanted me to wait, where I stood and himself went forward a few paces in the direction of the brick fields. He was not gone very far but all on a sudden seemed to return and taking me along with him, this our "doctor returned" began to proceed in the direction of the kitchen, talking to me as we walked. "Are you not afraid of me?" he asked. "I am not your doctor, though I appear in his form. Do you believe in ghosts?" I could not at first make any meaning out of all that he said, more than that he was trying to humour me a bit and so only smiled now and again at his pains.

How could I believe that he was only an apparition and not the doctor himself, when I saw that he was quite a man in flesh and blood, just like ourselves and the very image of the doctor I was talking to, only a few minutes ago? We had both walked hand in hand for some distance together, so that there could be no room for any the slightest doubts as to the visible, tangible and perfectly material character

of his person. Could one for any earthly reason believe him to be a ghost? We have all heard about ghosts, I think, but what is the impression that we get generally, when we hear some one talk of an unearthly creature such as that? We all, very likely picture him in our imagination, as a shadowy figure and no substance, with the addition perhaps of some outlandish disproportion in his horrible looking form. Our story books that deal with such phantasms, suggest this very idea only and nothing more. However as we both walked for some distance together, we came by the side of our cookshed, to the small courtyard, behind the barracks, where I slept at night.

There he told his attendant Tindale, to fetch him a cane chair, which he did practically in no time, as if by magic. I saw some official-looking papers also, that the doctor (?) took up from the chair and began indifferently turning pages from; this gave him the appearance of an officer that was there on matters of business. In fact he was doing practically no work of any kind; the bundle of papers served only for a cover, to screen himself from the eager and curious gaze of the bystanders, so that he

might talk to me more at ease. "Your future is full of the most awful sufferings", he said, and advised me as a friend and well-wisher, to go and hang myself on a tree near by. He simply could not imagine, he said, how I was to bear all that there lay in store for me, in the near future. And comparing the two sides of the question he was of opinion that it would prove a much safer course for me, if I were to commit suicide. Later on, however, he seemed to change his views regarding the situation and said, "Nay, that could not be. Niyati kena badhyate", which means, "who could withstand Fate?" As he was saying this, our former acquaintance, the Sub-Assistant Surgeon, appeared from behind, as if in very great haste, and excused himself saying that he was sorry he was so late, and could not come earlier. So exchanging a few words with his official superior, they wanted me to look the other way, which when I did they all vanished together as in a whirlwind.

I felt quite stupefied for a time, after they had disappeared, and did not know what to do. In the meantime, our real doctor had sent for me; and when I went to him, I found, he was

attending to the construction of our brick-furnace. From his very appearance it looked plain, that he was feeling somewhat exhausted and could only with difficulty manage to exchange a few words with me. He was waiting there, for so long, he said and felt rather tired. He did not at first realise he said that it would take me so long to return to him. I could clearly see that he was eagerly seeking for an opportunity, to hear from me all that I had seen and heard, regarding the supernatural, in his absence; but not with any very great amount of success, I may say. It so happened at this juncture that we both felt quite tongue-tied as to making any mention of what had taken place. He actually tried to ask me once or twice, but had to give up the idea, knowing that it would not do; so that we had to part, taking leave of each other; he having left for his station head-quarters, and I for my work. The exhaustion that our doctor felt, seems to me to have been due to his having spent some of his powers, in giving his Omnipresent double the incentive to appear in material form.

VI.

It will be seen from the events that followed very shortly, that the prophecy made by the Supernal, came true even to the very letter; and the period that followed, proved one of the most painful periods of my life, of which my readers will come to know ere long.

After working for some time more, in the brick-fields, the work for the season closed, and people began to leave for other stations from which they had come. As for myself, I had to remain there, till it was definitely decided as to whether I should have to change again for some other station, or keep to my place, as I was. Whether for want of any other work, or out of pure malice, I could not be quite definite, they gave me to drag water next for a few days.

This was no ordinary task and those of my readers that live on the plains of Bengal or of Hindoostan, cannot possibly form any idea as to what it was like. So I think, it is better for me to explain and give some idea regarding this most interesting piece of "Giant Labour". There was a pond just at the foot of the hill, on which were the convict barracks;

by the side of that hill, rose another much higher, and much steeper, on the top of which was the Overseer's Bungalow. It was ordered that I should carry water, from the pond down below, up that steep hill, to the Saheb's Bungalow on top. It was due perhaps to the sweet will and caprice of our European Overlord, or might have been due to the eagerness of our Jamader to please his Saheb, that we had to do this almost superhuman feat; else there was no need at all for our levelling the already level court-yards, even though it meant such huge labour and under conditions so risky and dangerous to the lives of those employed; where there was every chance of some one slipping his foot every minute. The water that we had to carry each time, was also not a very small quantity, and I mean no joke, when I say that it amounted to some thing quite near a maund in weight, and had to be carried on our shoulders, filled in two kerosene oil tin canisters, suspended on a pole at both ends. Now my readers can imagine what it meant to carry such a load uphill, and such a very steep hill too.

This also I did, without a grudge; but my

health would permit no more, what was I to do? There seemed no other course open to me, but to refuse work point blank. I called accordingly the petty officer in charge of my work and told him that I was not going in for any more work, from that day forward. He took me to the overseer and the overseer in his turn sent me up to the court of the District officer, Mr. Lewis for trial. When I reached Viper, I was told that the Dt. officer was not going to hold his court that day. I had, therefore, to pass the night in Viper jail, instead of going back to Dundas Pt. only for so short a time. I came, therefore, to the Dt. Court for trial, the day following. Viper jail was no a jail practically, but retained its name only because it used to be a jail once. Before the erection of the big Cellular jail in Aberdeen Island, this Viper jail served the purpose of a jail for the entire Andaman settlements. There is a bit of history connected with the construction of this particular jail, which I think it will not be altogether uninteresting to note in passing.

All of my readers have heard I believe, the name of the famous "Tower of London", an

interesting piece of edifice, noted in history, for its many important, though painful and sad associations in connection with the lives of so many of England's very greatest of men, even kings and queens not excepted, that had to end their miserable days, within the four walls of this grim courtyard. The connection of association that makes me mention all this, lies in the plan of the above mentioned "Tower", which fact I came only to know later on, while in Madras. There I accidentally happened to turn pages from a book on English History, that came to my hand, in which book, was a picture given of that famous London Tower. Immediately it struck me as most curious, that the picture should resemble, in every minute detail, the plan of construction of the Viper jail, in which I had to pass a night once, while in the Andamans.

There was another picture I noticed in that book, that bore a great resemblance to another piece of architecture that I came across there, in the Andamans and seemed to be very suggestive. The picture represented the famous Westminster Abbey and the piece of architecture referred to above was the Temple that

they had erected in the Andamans for purpose of holy worship. Both seem to have been constructed on the same plan, though perhaps the Andaman Temple, was only a miniature imitation of the Abbey, in Westminster. The book that gave me all this information, proved to be a very interesting little work, by Sir Walter Besant, a very remarkable personage, in the quite well-known literary circles, of the last half century. I have read several of his contributions to the "Chamber's Journal", from the old bound volumes, that I found in the Lunatic Asylum Library, and enjoyed much all that I read.

The little book on English history, that I came across there, was intended, I think, for a school text-book, and was made so interesting, and written in such clear and lucid style, that though I have been a very bad student of history all along, I could not help going through the whole book, once I have taken it up. If, instead of all the rubbish that we are made to swallow, in the name of history, in our Universities, books such as these, were prescribed for our texts, the very crushing burden and drudgery of committing to memory, heaps of uninterest-

ing reading and jumble of facts, scattered helter-skelter in wild confusion, altogether unassimilable, without any perspective or background, to show them in proper relief,—all this nuisance would have been in great measure minimised, and our poor students, would have found time to breathe more freely and easily, than they are able at present, under the dead weight of the existing system.

However, to return to our story. 'Next day when I appeared before the court of Mr. Lewis, the District Officer, and made known to him my intentions, he seemed not to understand my point. He was a very good and kind-hearted gentleman and said, "All right, if you can not work, go and take rest for a few days". "How was I to do that?" I asked. "Why", he said, "Go, and ask the doctor for a medical certificate, so that we may exempt you, from work, for some time; or you may get yourself admitted into the hospital if you like." "Why will the doctor give me such a certificate", I asked, "or admit me into the hospital either, unless he felt satisfied as to my illness? I have got neither fever nor any other kind of illness, appreciable to the doctor. Moreover, it may be

very likely, that I have increased in weight lately. I seemed to see no way open to me, but to refuse work, till I should feel equal to it once again."

Again from all this argumentation in court, it was my experience after all these years of unceasing, hard manual labour that there was to be no concessions for us politicals, labour however much as we may. The more we worked the more yet remained. What was the use of all this, I thought, and to what purpose? Why should I go and spoil my life, of my own free will, carrying out such ungenerous and unrelenting behests, as tended only to injure my health and shatter my nerves? The officials could only be said to possess a certain amount of physical control over our persons, as long as we happened to be within their jurisdiction, but beyond they could not go, and if we chose not to abide by their decisions, beyond a certain limit, we were perfectly justified, and they could do nothing to thwart us in the exercise of one's own free will. Simply because, by some ill turn of fortune, they had chanced to become the masters of our physical persons, for a time, would it be any reason to allow them

have control over our mind also, and make ourselves entirely the fools and slaves of their passion and caprice? The very idea, seemed an abomination and I could on no account make myself do that, come what may.

When after arguing with me at great length the District officer found, that I was neither ready to work, nor to enter into any humiliating compromise or compact, with the doctor or any body else, it became unavoidable, that I must get tried by the court. He, however, did not like to try me himself, and so had to send for his subordinate, whom he entrusted with the trial of my case, in his court, when he came. I went accordingly with the Chota-Shaheb to his court, where I entered my statement, in the case-book, as follows, "I hereby state that as I am unable to do any physical labour, I refuse to work." Hearing my statement the Chota Shaheb sentenced me to three months' additional rigorous imprisonment and ordered me to be sent to the Cellular Jail.

VII.

When I arrived at the gate of the Cellular Jail, I met the Jailor and when he came to know

the reason why I was sent there, he began to try his threats on me, in order to make me work. "This is jail," he said, "and not outside, that you will escape from work, by playing tricks with us. Here the discipline is very strict and if you refuse to work, it will go very hard with you. The very first time you refuse, you will get standing handcuffs; the second time you will get bar fetters; and still if you continue to refuse a third time, do you know what you will get? Mind what I say, and take care; you will get thirty lashes; the very worst kind of punishment that is meted out in jail here, and do you know what those thirty lashes mean? Each lash that you will get, will cut into your flesh one inch deep! We will treat you like the ordinary Badmashes, and no consideration will be shown to you as sons of gentlemen."

Those of my readers that have read Barin Baboo's "Dwipantar Katha", must have got some idea regarding this veteran of the Andamans, I mean this jailor that was working there for the last thirty or forty years and has acquired for himself the altogether unenviable reputation, of being the "terror" of the whole

jail, shaking often the entire buildings to the very foundations by his ever so foul imprecations and more than leonine roar. Even the most daring and desperate of criminals, began shaking in their shoes, when any of them happened by chance to incur the jailor's wrath. This time too he seemed to think that he could bring me down to terms, simply by his threats and voluble utterances, making me do whatever work he might choose to give. I for myself knew full well, that it was not possible to serve God and Mammon both and stood firm in my resolve not to yield under any circumstances. "You talk of thirty lashes", I told him, "you can try and cut me to pieces and see if you can get a jot of work out of me, as long as I consider it wrong to do that". Finding me quite determined and fixed in my purpose, he felt somewhat disconcerted, but said, "Oh! you are very stubborn! All right, if you choose to prefer punishment, you can have your way". Saying this, he ordered me to one week's standing hand-cuffs. And in order to prove to me, beyond all doubt, that the jailor was all in all, as far as the jail went, he undertook to show me some of his supernatural powers. "You

have insulted me," he said, "and I am prepared to fight out a duel with you, for the sake of my honour and self-respect. Have you got a second to act for you?" I, however, could not quite understand what he was driving at, and so, failed to give him a ready answer. Finding me so undecided, he himself came forward to suggest to me the name of "Savarkār". "I think Savarkar will do, he will certainly stand second for you if asked". In the meantime I seemed to see a set of telephone instruments, suddenly appear, on the table before me, as if by magic; by means of these he seemed to be sending messages in different directions. Whenever, he called aloud for "Savarkar", by his surname "Vinayak" instantly there appeared a figure, somewhat similar in appearance, but thinner, and much shorter than the one known to us. The jailor as soon as this new figure appeared, made known his intentions to him and asked, if he had any objections to standing second for me. To this he made answer agreeing quite readily to his proposal, but said, that it was at the same time necessary that he should throw his gauntlets first, by way of challenge, if he were to observe the usual forms

in practice before fighting a duel. As for those gauntlets, he said, that he had none; and unless the jailor himself lent him his own, the question remained unsolved. The jailor however agreed to lend his gloves for the time being and in a trice, produced a pair from an imaginary pair of arms, giving them to my supposed second. The spectacle turned so interesting at this stage, that I began to watch with bated breath, the issues of the fight, and was indeed quite glad to find that the whole scene turned in my favour at the end. The said 'Savarkar' having taken the pair of gloves from the jailor, threw one, with such unerring aim at him, that it fell squat on his face and made him smart, looking quite the fool that he was. The conclusion, thus appeared to turn decidedly in our favour, but time was short for any further demonstrations and so, all this phantasmagoria vanished, as suddenly as they had appeared and I had to go to to my standing handcuffs, as ordered by our Prison Lord.

VIII.

None of my readers perhaps have got any idea, as to this most ingenious piece of device, taken recourse to, by our jail authorities, in the name of jail discipline; so I had better explain what it was like, that my readers may be better able to judge, as to our sufferings, in the hands of those that appeared then to wield our very destiny so to say.

There were several pairs of handcuffs, suspended on as many hooks on the wall, as high as a man's head and we had to stand a whole day, facing that wall, with our hands locked in one of those beautiful looking pairs of iron bangles, given us by our benevolent masters, entirely free of all cost. There was only a very short interval of time, allowed for our mid-day meals, when the hand-cuffs were opened for us, only to get back to them as soon as the meals were over. The very first day, when they gave me the punishment, I seemed to feel rather feverish, after I had stood against the wall for some time. The slanting rays of the morning sun, fell on my back direct, as there was no protection against them throughout the whole

block in which I was made to stand. The fever began to rise very quickly, but I continued to stand with this fever on for some time. In the meantime a very strange incident took place. I was just thinking of sending word, regarding my fever, when I suddenly seemed to hear a clanking noise coming from the direction of the big iron door, leading to our corridor, and looked around and the door opened and two Europeans stepped in. One of them I took for the jailor himself and the other seemed to appear to me, somewhat like Dr. O'Neil, who was in the Alipore jail at the time when we were there. Dr. O'Neil, I thought, might have got transferred, to the Andamans and so came to see me. They asked, what the matter was with me, when they came near, and I told them that I had got fever. "Oh, you've got fever?" and produced a doze of medicine, in a green coloured measure glass, as if they came ready prepared, from before-hand. "Take this medicine, this is quinine, and if you take it, it will do you good," they said, but when they saw that I was going to take that medicine, without in the least suspecting anything wrong with it one of them shouted, "Stop! don't take it; this is not quinine, but

strychnine; this is poison and if you take it, it will kill you''. What is this, I thought, why do they make fun of me like this? But as I had no suspicion of either of them, I did not in the least hesitate, to take what there was in the measure glass; and took their bi-faced utterance for a joke only and did not mind. When they saw that I had taken the dose of medicine, in all good conscience, with not even a twitch or tremor of an eye-lash, they seemed to think, that I would serve them in good faith, whenever they should require my services, in order to gain their own ends. With this for their object it seems, they gave me to repeat an incantation in Hindusthani, that read as follows:—“Kaiser hi Czar hai” i.e. the German Emperor Kaiser, was the Czar of all the Russias. Not only this, they made me learn, how to pronounce ‘Czar’, properly, which they themselves pronounced, several times, before me, with the “Cz” sounding like ‘S’ with a nasal twang on it. After having given me, to repeat the above aphorism, they went away. I, however, did not care to practise repeating, the Mantram and only did it for once or twice, simply out of curiosity.

Just within a few minutes of their departure, the fever appeared to rise very high and a terrible shivering came on me, and cold. In the meantime the Doctor arrived; the thermometer indicated that the fever was already as high as 107° . They got me down at once, from my hand-cuffs and placed me in a cell nearby. There I fell nearly unconscious and began to get very severe spasms also, followed by the lock-jaws. The Doctor then found it necessary to keep me constantly before his very eyes, so that he might carefully watch the symptoms as they showed themselves, and ordered my removal to hospital accordingly.

I had accordingly to be carried, by about half a dozen men, on their shoulders, and I remember what trouble it was, to those men, that had to carry me as a load, so many stories down first; and then so many stories up again, to the hospital ward, while I was getting such awful fits of spasms on the way. However, they managed somehow, and with great difficulty, to drop me down on a bed, where the Medical Superintendent examined me and gave injection first. Later on, I remember, they gave me a very severe battery charge, the effects

of which I believe was indeed very serious on my system; so much so, that I felt as though my whole physical frame was being shaken to its very roots, and I was passing through a most fearful and critical period of my life. The currents of electricity, that passed through my body, seemed to cut asunder all nerves and sinews, most mercilessly.

IX.

The scene that followed, I feel ashamed to describe in its exact details; but this much I will say, that I felt as if I got possessed of the demon at the time and began to utter such foul language, as I could not even dream of uttering any time in my life. Since then I remained quite unconscious of this outside world, and for how long or for what period, I have no clear idea; but later on as I came to my senses, they told me, that the critical period lasted for nearly three days. My friends finding my case so serious, had actually given me up for lost. Though I was lying down totally oblivious of all this external world, my memory seemed to retain quite a jumble of recollections,

regarding all that I had seen and felt, during that state.

The effects of the battery charge seemed to have been, to turn me 'inside out,' so to say, and thereby render me subject, more or less, to influences, that I had never before been subject to. The mind lens that is concavely adjusted to our inner self, so as to render it possible to focus its rays to a point, on the external world, unravelling its mysteries thereby, when reversed, no more remains concave to the inner, but is turned concave to the outer world, and the effect of it is that the outside gets the upper-hand, and the inside begins to shrink. Before such reversal, it was indeed a source of great pleasure to me, to sit now and again, in an attitude of prayer before my Deity, and get consolation and solace from Him conserving all the disturbed and distracted mental forces thereby and renewing them from within. But such self-adjustment and self-concentration became a practical impossibility, under the reversed conditions. I began more and more easily to be affected, by the external currents, and could not contain myself within.

This seemed to me to have been just the

case after I had received the battery charge. The outside, or the not-self, began to pour in, like rain, inspite of all that the self could do to guard itself against this uncalled for intrusion. If, for instance, instead of being able to take my meals according as I felt the need of, food began to force its way into my mouth and stuff my stomach against my will, not caring whether I required it or not, what do you think my condition then would appear to be? Would I not then become the very worst miserable creature on earth imaginable? It is for this reason only that we find in the wise rule of Providence, specified limits and boundaries fixed for each individual soul ; to grow and develop according to his own individual nature or tendency, instead of getting confused in a muddle of diversities, resulting from the myriads of heterogeneous forces, that are working in nature, each according to its own individual bend or direction.

It appears to us quite a miracle, when we ponder over the fact that we are all of us being constantly subjected to a pressure of atmosphere, which means a weight of thirty pounds, per every square inch of space on our persons,

exposed; and calculating the total area that has got to bear this pressure, it will I think amount to something quite overwhelming; and yet how wonderful is the balance of forces. We do not many of us seem even to know that we are each and every one of us such heavy-weight champions born. If per chance due to some unforeseen cause, our physical frame or mental were rendered weaker at any particular point, the balance would get disturbed, followed by a redistribution of forces, leading either to the total extinction ultimately, of the life-forces.

Of course, it is not capable of demonstration always, to show how things happen in our mental world in the same way as it is possible with regard to our physical. Life is indeed a mystery, and a result of the most complex combinations of forces known and unknown, within its fabric. Still, for all that, we try and cannot but try to get a peep into its hidden mysteries.

It is because of this, that I venture, to make an attempt at explaining, what I had experienced, regarding this very subtle entity time and again, during so many of the critical periods of my life, when made almost to face

that grim spectre, known to us, by the name of 'Death'. There are several kinds of 'death' mentioned in our 'Sastras', of which the physical is one. The others are, so to say, partial 'deaths', due to some forms of transgression, in respect to the mental or moral laws. Life is flowing like the sacred waters of the 'Gangotri' or the source of the Ganges, where little streamlets, trickling through beds of rocks, from thousand different directions, join in a single flow, to which we give the name Ganga or The Ganges. It is possible to control this flow artificially, in two different ways; first, by controlling the 'individual streamlets severally, one by one; secondly, by taking the whole flow in its total capacity, at the confluence or junction. This I think will apply as equally true with regard to the flow of life that animates our physical frames; allowing, of course, for all that has not yet been learnt with regard to its origin and source.

Though perhaps all this will appear somewhat of a digression from the main theme I am engaged with, yet considering the importance of such cogitations, in facilitating my efforts at finding an explanation, regarding many

obscure phenomena I have observed, I deem it necessary to give my readers a little trouble, which I hope will not make them altogether impatient. All this is to show, how a sort of connecting link was forged on to my mental and physical constitution, joining me to systems not as a rule connected, or in any way incorporated with our earthly being.

Of course, in a general way, and very vaguely speaking, every one believes the whole of creation, Physical, Mental, Moral, Cosmic or Supra-cosmic, all to be one single system only, controlled and directed by one and only one single purpose at the back. Yet they all know at the same time, that there are systems and systems, each clearly and distinctly defined and differentiated from every other, so as not to make a confusion of them all. The connection joining them into a single whole, seems to be through 'key-ways' and 'small gates' leading from one to another. It appears to us that the very small hole, through which Hanuman and Hanuman alone could make his entrance, in the form of a fly, to the inner Courts of 'Lanka', or the very small-gate made mention of in the Christian Bible, through

which it was not possible for a rich man to pass, meant nothing more nor less, than that very opening that joins system with system, planet with planet, and cosmos with cosmos.

When I was subjected to the electric currents from the battery and the pressure rose so high as to exceed the limits of my endurance, what happened I have told already and it is needless to repeat that here once more. All that I want to say is, that I felt as though some subtle force, or 'being,' finding me quite powerless against the high-pressure electric charge, took the advantage of entering my persons, by forcing out a certain portion of my inner being through the head. The effect of it reminds me of what we had read, while in College from Milton, regarding the birth of 'Sin' from out of 'Satan's' head.

X.

Then, on the third or the fourth day I regained consciousness somewhat, looked quite the figure of a skeleton, so to say, come back to life from Death's door. Slowly and gradually as I began to improve, they changed my

bed and removed me to a single cell within the Hospital Ward. I had not yet recovered completely from the effects of the first attack and there arose a fresh complication. I began to see visions that I took for what was actually taking place in my own native land and made the most woeful of blunders. I seemed to hear such pitiable and heart-rending cries of woe and misery coming from people I loved and held dear to me, that it became impossible for me to bear the sight in my then state of mental and physical illness. I began to blame myself as the root cause of all this evil and felt as though I had turned out the very worst culprit imaginable on the face of the earth, making mischief only and no good. During one of those mortifying fits of morbid imagination and low vitality the pangs of conscience that I felt, proved so acute and unbearable, that I preferred to commit suicide, rather than endure such horrible dejection.

As I was turning the question in my mind and sought for an effective means for carrying out my resolve into action, it struck me as in a flash, that the carpet they gave me to use for my bed, was splendid material for making a

rope, strong enough to bear my weight. No sooner thought, than done; and I set to work immediately and began taking out threads from its texture, making them into a rope as desired. There was a barred window at the back of my cell, a little higher up than a man's head; there I managed some how to climb and tie my rope at one end, the other hanging loosely down, with a knot fastened into a noose. I clambered up again and was just about to hang myself, putting my neck into the noose, when it so turned out, that I appeared to see some one standing at a distance, watching me from behind. I came down at once and gave up the attempt for fear of detection.

Fortunately for me, however, my 'battery-superintendent' happened to have been away, on leave, at the time and our old superintendent, Dr. Murray, had come back to his place; else there were no knowing, what fresh troubles might have followed. The next day, when the superintendent came on his rounds and was going past my cell, the tattered condition of the carpet attracted his notice. It was all due to my want of foresight in the matter, in not having kept the thing rolled up or hidden in a corner,

instead of leaving it spread-out, as I did, on the floor, exposed to view. "What is this you have done?" he asked. I really did not know what to say and so, had to play a dodge with him, and instead of giving him a direct answer to his question, I put a counter one in return. I knew, he was a gentleman and very kindly disposed towards us, so that he would not get annoyed with me if I teased him with any questions however unbecoming. "Do you think", I asked, "we committed a very heinous crime before we came here, for which offence we ought to feel ashamed of ourselves"? He felt rather ill at ease at first when he heard from me a question so very peculiar, but said, "How could you expect an answer to such a question from me? I am an Englishman, whereas, you are an Indian; are our interests the same? Moreover, I am a Government servant, how am I to side with you, against the Government that I serve? However, as you ask me, I shall say this much, to console you,—that from your own stand-point, you are quite right, and have no reason to blame yourself, for whatever you might have done, for the sake of your country's liberation. I see no reason why you

should repent, having done what you thought was right."

Hearing such words of consolation from him, I seemed to gain new life and told every thing plainly and openly, hiding nothing from him, so that he might judge me as he ought. I told him how I began to see the most horrible pictures of woe and misery around me, regarding my own people and taking them for true, how I blamed myself, as the root cause of all this evil, up to my final attempt at escaping from all these misgivings, by committing suicide; and its failure, due to some one, peeping into my room. He was quite surprised to hear from me such news and said that he had never expected such a thing from me at least. He had formed a very high opinion of me, when he met me for the first time, but was sorry to find that I had made of myself such a fool as to think of committing suicide and escape from trouble thereby. "You are a young man, quite in your prime of life, with all your future lying unexplored before you; how could you have the thought of committing such a cowardly and shameful act as that? Aren't you ashamed of yourself for what you were

going to do? What is twenty years time to a young man like you, that you should lose heart like this? Do your term like a man and go back to your country; wouldn't that be much better than dying here in your shame? I understand your troubles full well; excessive hard manual labour, seems to me, to have been the cause of all this; but you know, I am a Government servant and the Government order is, to put you to hard labour always, never to take you out of it. I am sorry I cannot do anything for you in matters relating to your labour; but then, there is one thing that I can do for you, which I think will get you out of your troubles to a great extent and that is, to send you to the lunatic asylum. There is a lunatic asylum in the Andamans, meant for the demented criminals here; if you like, I can send you there and in my opinion, you will do well to go to that place. There will be no compulsory labour for you and you will be at your liberty more or less to do whatever work you choose; or you may even sit quiet if you like and no one will molest you there."

This was just the thing I needed and so accepted his proposal most gladly. The very

dark clouds that had began to collect around and over my head, with all the ominous forebodings of a gloomy and lowering sky, seemed to shew its silver lining at last and I thanked my stars for sending me this timely relief and badly needed succour. But for this change into an altered state of things in my new home, it were a matter, greatly to be doubted, whether I should have survived to see my native land again." I expressed my heart-felt gratitude to the superintendent and thanked him for all that he had said and done, for my encouragement and support; specially for my transfer to a much safer refuge, *viz.*, the lunatic asylum.

XI.

When I came away from jail, to my new abode the assistant surgeon in charge of the place also appeared to be very kindly disposed towards me, being a Bengali, hailing from some eastern District of my native Province. He began from the very first to take great interest and care regarding my diet and other necessary comforts, though I never asked for any of them myself. It was indeed a source of great pleasure to meet with such warm sympathy and

fellow-feeling, from well-wishers and benefactors such as the 'above', in such a benighted and out-of-the-way place, as convict settlement, where one could only expect to see the very worst aspects of humanity represented. The way this Brahmin Doctor began to look after my needs, often waiting on me as a mother on her child seems worth notice and I shall be doing him an injustice if in my indifference I forget to pay my respect to him, for his almost paternal care of and attention to me during my illness. He would often send for me and have me taken to his own lodgings, if it were any time reported that I was neglecting my meals. There, he would often coax me and urge me, to take my food, as if I were a child. He would even go the length of getting his own dishes for me, cooked and prepared perhaps by his wife herself, thinking that they would be more tasteful to me and so would willingly take them instead of refusing. He would introduce me to his little children as their 'Dada' (elder brother), and tell them to bring their playthings and play with me. My own mental condition also, at the time, happened to be more or less like that of a child only and I found in

those little brats, a very enjoyable company indeed.

Those amongst the lunatics that were somewhat in their senses and could safely be depended upon, were given to work in the gardens attached to the asylum. There was a considerable area of lands, set apart for cultivation, by the lunatics there; and the fruits and vegetables grown by them, amounted to a considerable quantity also. By and by, as I improved a little in my health, both mental and physical, they told me to keep the vegetable accounts, if it should suit my inclinations, *i.e.* to register the quantity of vegetables, that were being sent daily to different places for consumption and their respective prices, calculated at two pence per pound. I tried once or twice, but found, that my mind wandered and I could not do the work. So, I had no other go but to let the account take care of itself; and instead of bothering my head with its calculations I took to rambling about the gardens whither-so-ever I liked.

Though the health conditions of the place seemed not quite satisfactory, the sea-girt isles with their hilly crests, unique in the tropical

grandeur of their rich velvet green vegetation, looked like so many little gems set to perfection in the midst of the limitless blue of the sea. In one word the natural scenery of the place, appeared to set at naught, all comparison and looked just the place suited for a poet, to draw his inspirations from. As for myself, it would have been possible for me to enjoy this "life in the wilderness", like the very spirit of the woods in its fullness of being, free from all earthly care and anxiety, drinking deep into Nature's most secret life-springs, had I been in my normal condition of body and mind. But for me as I was, there remained but little to enjoy, even in things most enjoyable, little to feel for, even in things that seemed to ooze out feeling from the very heart of Nature, full of life's deep meaning and pathos in their silent emanations and mute utterances.

They gave a petty officer and two watchmen to keep constant watch and ward over me, so that they had to be with me, wherever I went and in whatever I did, not even excepting night time, when one of them had to sleep in my room by turns, so as to make sure that I did not again attempt my life, as I

once did only lately. They, however did nothing to annoy me, by exercising any undue authority and control over me so that I could please myself any way I liked, inspite of their vigilance. They gave me full freedom to go wherever I liked within the asylum boundary, but beyond I was not to go.

There was another of our case men, Baboo Ram Hari, from the Punjab, who was stationed in one of the settlement out-houses close by and had to work there in one of the settlement gardens adjacent to our asylum. Whenever he could make time, he would come to see me; and I found it a matter of great consolation and solace, being able to enjoy the pleasure of his company, worried and dejected as I felt after my late illness. Hemda, Upendra, Barindra, Bbibuti, Sudhir, Abinash, Nandagopal and all came to see me also now and again, as they could manage, inspite of the strict orders served out on us by the Port Blair authorities not to meet amongst ourselves. I always used to feel highly elevated in spirits whenever any of them came and tried in their own way to cheer me up a bit, breaking thereby the loneliness and monotony of one of the very saddest and most

doleful periods of my life, without hope or without prospects, eked out into a sort of vegetable persistence, spending most of my time in company with a thoughtless, mumbling herd of illiterates, with whom there could be no possible interchange of ideas concerning life's seriousness; and when time came for their departure, I knew how loath was I to part with them. It looks such a strange irony of fate indeed, that a group of youngmen such as those, born in so many different climes, brought up under such diverse circumstances should have met to join in a single purpose, forming ties of affection and brotherhood, stronger even than those of blood.

XII.

I continued in this condition for some four or five months more, without any noticeable change, when one morning there came the news, that the Director-general of Prisons from India had arrived and was coming to visit our asylum that day. It was he that held the supreme office over the whole jail department in India, not even excepting the Andamans. I had met him once before in Alipore jail and to me he

seemed a very nice gentleman. This time when he came to our asylum and saw me, he seemed scarcely able to recognise me, so changed was I in my physical and mental outlook. The first time when he had met me in Alipore, I looked quite stout and strong, one of the stoutest of the lot, so to say, and the contrast that my present pitiable Chirossouro of a figure, bore to the one that he had seen before, appeared as something quite appalling. "How is it that you look so thin and worn out?" he asked, "You must have gone down greatly in weight; how would you do your term of twenty years life sentence, if you continue in your present state of health"? I told him all that I could, relative to the history of my late illness and he seemed to take great compassion on me when he came to learn all that I had to say. "You ought to get transferred to some Indian jail, or else it seems scarcely possible that you will live long enough to be able to complete your term. I shall write to Government for your transfer and do everything in my power, to get your transfer sanctioned". So saying, he asked me next, as to what I saw during

the attacks of illness, that I now and again suffered from.

I forgot to tell my readers, that I used to get very severe attacks of fever and spasms, even after I had come over to the lunatic asylum. Just before the fever started, temperature fell very low and there came on me such severe fits of spasms during those attacks, that it became almost impossible for the man attendant on me, to keep me under control. I began kicking and fidgeting and butting my head against the wall, running altogether wild like a mad man. By and by as the temperature rose and the body became warm, the spasms left me and I fell into a semi-conscious state of delirium; seeing all sorts of luminous visions and fanciful dreams. When the D.G. wanted to know what I saw in those visions, my impression as to their import and significance with reference to the future, seemed to lead me to some very ominous conclusions, of which I made no secret and told him plainly what I thought. "I seem to see, as if the whole world is coming to its end", these were just the words that came to my mind, and I gave that out to him in so many words. The D. G. in answer said

“You are right, in a way ; all Europe is going to engage in a death-struggle against Germany in the near future ; a struggle that is very likely to prove the most sanguine of its kind, yet recorded in history”. Till that time I had no idea as to the possibility of a great European War and did not hear any news suggestive of any such forecast, not even a rumour ; and yet how strange, the whole foreboding became true and so strangely true ! However I had not many months to wait for my transfer, after the D. G. left Andamans ; he seemed to have taken immediate steps to that effect, as soon as he had reached India ; and very soon the order came.

In the meantime there occurred a very sad and regrettable incident, relating to the premature and tragic death of one of our brightest boys, Indu Bhushan Roy, who committed suicide by strangulation, in one of his ill-fated moments of morbid imagination. What made him do this, I am at a loss, even now, to understand, as it seems scarcely possible for a boy of his stamp, to have made such a fool of himself, as he had done and for reasons apparently so childish and improbable, as have been vouchsafed by some. However, it does not sound

quite nice in my lips, to blame him much for his indiscretion, as I myself had grazed past that very tempting snare once and only escaped getting trapped into it, by a mere chance. If a grown-up young man like me with all my education and training, could get way-laid, as it chanced with me once, what could be said of such youthful souls as Indu Bhushan, scarcely out of his teens, when they fell prey to such idiosyncrasies and committed such fatal blunders. Inscrutable are the ways of Providence and no less those of man, created after His own image; and we are liable to get deceived very easily in our calculations regarding even the very steadiest, and the most noble of souls, with reference to the figure they are destined to cut in the shifting panorama of life.

There seems to appear acute-angled corners in our life's straight path-way, so many and varied, that we seem to be in constant danger every moment of our lives, of losing sight of our common goal and the company to which we belong and have common cause with. The Mahabharata story relating to the Pandava Maha Prasthanā, seems to me to be a very suggestive example, symbolising this very idea and proves

to us how even the very nearest and dearest of our friends and relations, get side-tracked and fall off from the main road leading to Life's ultimate goal, unable to keep the light of understanding, clearly before view, so as to be able to think and act, all together in one accord and make of life's tedium one single and continuous strain of harmony and music.

XIII.

When order came for my transfer, the messenger that brought me news, gave me to understand that I was going to be released altogether and sent home direct. There was the passenger boat "Maharaja" lying at anchor in the Andaman harbour and was about to leave for India, on its rotary circuit to one of her ports. The man wanted me immediately to get ready with my things, for my homeward journey. And I seemed to see no tricks played in what he said, believing it all to be true; not caring even to enquire as to whither was the boat bound this trip. I tied accordingly into a bundle, the few things,—some books, a few clothes, my iron cup and plates, the only ones that I had the right to call mine own and made

for the jetty ; from where the ferry-launch was to carry me to the big passenger boat, that was waiting at some distance from the coast. As I walked for some distance with the men that were to accompany me up to the steam-boat, a very strange thing happened.

I saw at some distance, the figure of a boy coming towards us, from the opposite direction. It appeared to me as if a portion of his side-face had got quite disfigured by some filthy disease. The man by my side asked me as to whether I knew that boy or not. The very question sounded quite ludicrous ; what earthly chance could there have been, of my coming to know this leprous beggar, as, such only he appeared to look from a distance, and I only laughed away in answer. When the boy further approached us a little, my attendant called out to him "Khan Saheb" and the boy replied "Ki Saheb" ? that is to say, "What Sir" ? My attendant again asked "Khao ki" ? "what do you eat" ? The boy replied "Ruti" i.e. "bread", in answer and began munching a lump in his fraction of a mouth, that appeared quite visible from inside, as he turned the lump this way and that

with his tongue; there being no muscular enclosure for nearly half the portion of his face.

“Don’t you know him?—he is your own brother”, said my attendant; and lo! all his nasty disease had vanished, as by magic and the boy appeared as though he were my brother himself, who I knew was in England and had been there for the last fourteen or fifteen years.

What is this! I thought. How did he manage to come here? Was it really that he went to England, or was it, that he had managed somehow, to dodge the family and had taken to a life of adventure, like the set of vagabonds that we once used to be? The manner of his dress seemed to show, that he was labouring under great pecuniary stress. There was only *Dhoti* that he was wearing, with not even a coat or shirt to cover his person. In one word he looked the very picture of poverty in his dress, but seemed in no way daunted, by the state of adversity he was being made to face. On the contrary, he tried even to cheer me up, by his utterances, full of hope and expectation of a bright and prosperous future. He appeared to talk most excellent English, quite at his ease, when he

spoke; and the explanation that he offered me for his coming to the Andamans, gave such a perverted turn to my imagination, that it took me years to right it again.

I seemed to understand from what he said, that there was no England for us Indians! All the stories that we heard, regarding people going to England for training and so forth, was mere myth and had no basis in fact!!! They were generally brought out of India, on the understanding that they were to be sent to England, but in reality they were brought to places like the Andamans only, where they could get their legal and other training, from the study of law, in its most concrete and applied form, in respect to the individual cases that are being sent there every year, to undergo transportation for life and so forth. When they finished their training and went back to India, they were made to keep this official duplicity and cunning strictly a matter of secret, not to be divulged under any conditions what-so-ever. As a result, the general public believe them to have returned from England only and do not suspect any thing underhand in the matter. It really makes me laugh when I look back and

scrutinise into the condition of my mind at the time; how I was made to swallow even the above diabolical pill, believing every thing to be true, in my foolish and child-like simplicity; and what a dupe, I proved, in the hands of delusional verities; taking all those cock and bull stories for real facts in all good conscience.

Later on, it set me thinking and I tried to probe into the depths of these supernatural trickeries, in order to ascertain, whether they were meant for a mere trick only, that the Supernals gave themselves the licence, to play on me, enjoying a little innocent mirth at my cost thereby, or whether, there was any deeper meaning, underlying such covert guile, or both. I seemed to see some light thrown on the matter by and by. It appears to me now, that there must be some very sharp mental boundary lines, maintained by the Supernals, whether by hook or crook, in order to maintain respectively, the clear-cut and well-defined individual lines of growth, on either side of existence, with the help of our natural mental predispositions or by means of some artificial creation of their own, however shrewd and cunning;—just in the same way, as we do, on our physical plane,

with regard to our individual home, or property, village or Pargana, sub-division or district, up to the very entire country itself, by means of natural or artificial barriers set up according as need be. • It may become necessary, to maintain this line of demarcation, by all possible means, up to a certain stage of development; while the mind is yet in its placid state and so liable, very easily to be affected, by any passing wind, favourable or unfavourable to its growth. We guard a plant while yet young keeping it in hot houses and nurseries, giving it the chance to grow, under all possible protection, against the vicissitudes of weather and climate;—which plant when fully grown, not only does not require all those protections, but may safely defy its enemies, even unto a challenge.

After having played the fool with me, as he did, my Supernal brother, gave me to understand, that he came to relieve me only, according to the custom that obtains in some of the native States where a brother or a relative might serve, in place of his brother or relative, any time, in case of necessity, when he happened to be undergoing a term of sentence in one of their jails, so that, the real offender went home

and the brother or the relative, underwent the term of sentence in his stead, for the time he remained absent. I, however, could not very well understand then, the meaning of all that he said, but now I seem to see, that it was not all for nothing. There must be a certain definite system, for the guidance of the hierarchical world in pursuance of which, they did, what I saw them do; even though it made of me such a fool, as to ascribe to them, in my ignorance, the ordinary earthly character of common-place incidents.

I took this Supernal, for the very earthly brother that is still in England and has been there for the last fourteen or fifteen years. I actually believed him to have come over to relieve me, himself serving in my place. From the above it will be seen, that as on the one hand the supernatural presentations appear to excite wonder and admiration, the most unique of their kind, on the other, may so pervert our imagination, as to make us believe in the most diabolical of falsehoods; and the beauty of it all is, that it may take us, perhaps, the greater half of a life-time, to realise the fact of their having been falsehoods, in

whose hands, we have been playing the dupes, so many years of our lives, before we could get the chance to find out their phantasmal and delusional character.

After all that conversation with my Supernal brother, we parted. I came over to the jetty, together with the men accompanying me, where we had not long to wait for the ferry launch to arrive; but when the ferry came, I seemed suddenly taken in, by some abject fear and uncalled for apprehension, beginning suddenly to doubt, that I was going to be released; thinking that the men were trying to send me stealthily away, under cover of some false pretext. The very thought made me shudder, stepping back a pace or two as the boat reached the jetty, and I could on no account make bold to enter the launch. The men finding me quite cataleptic as it were and unwilling to enter, began to stare at each other's faces and did not know what to do. Whistle after whistle went on, but I would not move; finding no other go, they had to lift me up and shove me into the boat at last and the ferry left. Such was the consternation raised in my mind, at the thought of getting foully kidnapped away, that I could not

get over that vague apprehension, even when the ferry landed me in Ross Island; where it being the official head-quarters of the Chief-commissioner, the business portion regarding my transfer had to be gone through before I could get myself booked for the journey. When they finally made for the big passenger boat with me, I would not stir and kept myself entirely passive, neither helping nor resisting them, in whatever they did for my transshipment. So, they had to carry me this time too, however unwillingly, till they had dropped me down on the floor of one of the holds at the bottom of the vessel. A few minutes more and the boat raised anchor, steaming off, on its watery course, that showed no boundary as far as the eyes could see. Here ends the Andaman portion of my story.

Part II.

I

I continued to remain in my lying-down posture, like a dead log of wood, even after the men that brought me to the boat, had left. The Doctor feeling my pulse came to the conclusion, that my condition was very serious indeed and administered a dose of brandy, inspite of all my efforts not to take it, forcing open my mouth and making me swallow the liquid at a gulp. It made me laugh almost, to notice the Doctor's ill-boding apprehensions and how restless he felt for fear if anything untoward should happen to me on the way, while he was in charge of my person. I knew that he had absolutely no grounds for fear, from what he had thought was the condition of my pulse. Mine has been a peculiar pulse ever since I was born and had frightened many a doctor before, in days gone by. The very submerged condition of the radial artery, made it throb so feebly and imperceptibly, that the doctors, whenever they came to see me during any illness. how-

ever slight, could not detect the flaw, unless the facts were made known to them and gave the danger signal at once.

As our boat began to cōurse its way, through the waters of the deep, tossing and see-sawing now and again on the crest of some swelling, uproarious billow, like a cockle-shell in the midst of all that great mass of sea water, shilhouetted against the limitless blue of a boundless horizon, our Doctor finding in me no change for the better, as I lay still, in a state of dejection and stupor, had me carried to the upper deck, where there was to be found plenty of sea-breeze and open air to invigorate my jaded nerves. There he gave me a forced nasal feeding in milk, and when he had finished, I looked about and saw much to my astonishment and dismay that our veteran sub-assistant surgeon had managed his business with the help of a gutta-percha catheter, for want of a feeding tube,—a thing that is used by medical men, I am ashamed to say, for purposes most filthy in character.

My readers can well imagine the state of my mind at the time; how it made my blood boil at the sight of a thing so nasty that had

been made to pass through my nostrils. It really makes me wonder, how a man even of the medical profession, could have turned so devoid of common sense, as would not hesitate to make use of such a queer and filthy apparatus, making it pass through the nostrils and the alimentary canal. Why this nasty dealing, repugnant to our imagination in the extreme, may I ask? Did you not my Doctor, force a doze of brandy into my mouth, and make me swallow the liquid, inspite of all my efforts at resistance? Could you not have done the very same, in the case of the milk also, instead of proving yourself the very dirty nuisance, that you did, if indeed you meant well and happened to be the well-wisher of my safety?

There was a European officer that I found was lying on his deck-chair; I tried to attract his notice, in order to get some assistance from him in making my protest against this insult and foul play. The European however frankly admitted his inability to interfere, as it was the doctor who was all in all in such matters. It looked quite plain from his answer, that there was to be no help for me, but to suffer it out

in wise silence. I went back therefore to my hold down below and lay quiet, counting the hours that passed and the days, till I should come to my journey's end.

II

On the third day as the boat reached its destination, I seemed to see an end to all my troubles at last. There arose a great hurry and scurry, noise and bustle amongst the passengers for some time; some getting in, others getting out, with all their luggage and kit, bag and baggage; but I lay quiet in my hold as before, biding my time, till it should be my turn to leave the boat. My readers will, I think, remember how I was given to understand, while leaving P. Blair, that I was being sent home; and so it naturally enough occurred to me that it must be Calcutta where I had arrived. But io! it was not Calcutta, but Madras!!! Think of my chagrin and annoyance at this sudden disclosure, even at the last moment, when I had already so far advanced in my imagination at least, as to be giving myself the airs and attitudes, of a person returned home, after years of separation and exile, participating

in the pleasures and enjoyments of a genial hearth at last, in company with the long lost dear ones.

. "What! not Calcutta?" I seemed to drop from the clouds!!! But why the deuce, did they send me to Madras, instead of to Calcutta, if they meant well and indeed wanted to give me my release? However, "the drowning man catches at a straw" as the proverb goes and I consoled myself with the belief, that there was yet some time left, before the passenger boat should leave for Calcutta; and in order to save me that time and trouble, they might have sent me 'en rout' Madras, from where I was to go to Calcutta by train.

As I was troubling myself with these far-fetched make-beliefs, the very European that we had once met before on the upper-deck of our steamer, came to take me with him, as the little jolly boat that was to carry us ashore, was already waiting for us, at the vessel's side. There seemed no other alternative left, but to follow this European, at least to know my fate for certain, if not for anything else.

There was another old man also, that came from the Andaman lunatic asylum, by the same

boat with us; he was an Oriya from the northern parts of the Madras Presidency, and had done nearly his term of "life sentence"; so that, he was being sent back to India. We both accompanied the European and the jolly-boat carried us ashore. There, the European disposed of the Oriya, giving charge of him to a police-man, directing him to take the man to the "Penitentiary", which was only another name for the "Madras Presidency Jail," where he was to wait till the time for his final release came. Having disposed of with his additional burden in this way, the European came to ask me where I should like to go. "To Bengal" straightway I replied, and without the least hesitation. The European appeared not to understand my meaning and so exclaimed "Bengal! what do you mean"? "Yes", I said, "to Bengal, where else? I am a Bengalee, where should I go unless it be to Bengal, wherefrom I come"? "But this is Madras", said the European, "and I was sent in order to bring you here, according to orders received from Government; otherwise why should they have sent you to Madras, instead of sending you to Calcutta direct"? "I was

given to understand," I said, "before I left the Andamans, that I was being sent home; and from this, I inferred that it must be Calcutta that our boat was bound for this trip; but I am indeed quite surprised to find that the boat has reached Madras Port instead". To this the European replied saying, that he knew nothing whatsoever relating to my release; the only object he had in view when he asked me, where I wanted to go, was to know, whether I should like to go to jail, as that other man did, or to the Lunatic Asylum in Madras?— which two alternatives were open to my choice. It would in his opinion be more convenient for both of us, if I chose the latter course, as he himself worked as one of the European Warders for the Government Lunatic Asylum in Madras. As for my release, he could not say anything very definite, unless the Superintendent examined my papers and let him know what was written there, so that he might decide once for all as to whether I was to go to jail, or to remain in the Lunatic Asylum, or whether I was to go back to my native place as a free man. To me what the European said, seemed quite reasonable, and I accepted his proposal,

preparing to go with him, most willingly. He called for a hackney coach, and when it came, we both entered and made for the Lunatic Asylum.

III

When we reached the Asylum, they put me in a two-roomed pukka building, of which I occupied one room, the other lying vacant for the time being. I was told that those rooms were meant for special class patients. The moment I arrived I seemed to hear great noise and bustle amongst the inmates of the place. It appeared to me, as if, they had found their man at last and so stirred themselves to action, some dropping down, others lifting up, empty and hollow sounding kitchen utensils, just to show me that they were empty and unfilled; if it should please my generosity to permit them, they would at once go and get them filled with eatables from the kitchen near by. They took me for some big wig, it seems and they would satisfy their long-famished maws, voraciously feeding upon my ever so generous bounty. Of course, there was no direct talk with me, to that effect. Every thing

seemed to work quite smoothly and mechanically, without a hitch and I had only to read between the lines. I seem to remember having read somewhere in Emerson's "Representative Men" in his chapter on Swedenborg the mystic, where he says that according to Swedenborg's views, regarding the manners and etiquette that obtain in Heaven, it is considered bad breeding to use the direct method in conversation and also to look one in the face direct. Everything had to be conducted there, in an indirect way; everything askance. This seemed to have been just the condition in the Madras Lunatic Asylum, when I went there for the first time.

Moreover, the local language being Tamil, it all sounded a queer jargon to me, full of hard consonants, with scarcely any liquid sounds or modulations, to mellow their tone. How well did Gopal Bhat describe it, in Raja Krishna Chandra's court, as sounding something like the rattling noise, that came out of a dry calabash-skin, when a few brick-bats were inserted and shaken. How many lunatics came and asked questions in their own native tongue, to which I could only make answer by shaking my

head and nodding assent or dissent according to the "deaf and dumb" art of speech perhaps, but neither party making any meaning out of what either party wanted to say. There were many amongst the warders, that knew Hindusthani and some that could talk a sort of broken English also; with their help it became possible for me at times, to indulge now and again, in some interesting topic of conversation, with the curious herd of inebriates that gathered around me, in season and out.

There is one particular feature, I feel inclined to make mention of, regarding this Madras Asylum, that appeared as something quite new to me and that was the employment of the mother sex for purposes of sick-nursing. Moreover there were accommodations made, both for Europeans as well as Indians there, leaving scope, for a much freer and more intimate mixing between the two communities;—a thing that could not as a rule be met with outside, where the two sections live distinctly apart from each other and frequent distinctly separate quarters. Although we may find nurses employed in Medical College and other hospitals in almost all the big cities in India I have

never seen them working in a place so dangerous as that of a Lunatic Asylum, where the most horrible atrocities are committed now and again by some one or other amongst the lunatics running amock in a fit of violent excitement.

I have never seen any Indian nurse working there, either Hindu, Mahomedan or Christian. They all belonged to the European and Eurasian communities and the way they ventured before such a suspicious lot of human beings, is indeed well worthy of all praise. Those that go to work there, come prepared, it seems, from beforehand, to risk their very lives for the sake of their job. But be the motive as it may, there could be no denying the usefulness of their services in mitigating the sorrows and afflictions of the most pitiable section of our human brotherhood, that we find represented there in a nut-shell. It could easily be said of them, that the very hardest of hearts and the most wretched of souls, find consolation and solace, getting softened in their hearts, when brought under the tender care and mellowing influences of the "mother sex". Who but a mother could nurse and suckle her child as she could? Who needed a mother's care, more

than he did? And the poor untutored and misguided child of nature, that has committed some mad act of indiscretion, in a heated moment of his life and has beaten his brow ever since, in repentance, to find shelter in the mad house at last; who but a mother could feel for such as those? Who but the mother sex, know the tender spots or the burning bruises in the recesses of their hearts, so as to alleviate their pain, or minimise their sorrow; even by a tender look, or a soft touch, or a sweet word? This reminds me of a song in Bengalee verse composed, I believe, by Rabi Babu himself, which I should like to quote here; rendered into English, however badly. "Sabai chherechhé nahi jar keha" etc.

"The wretch forlorn, with none,
 "In all this wide wide world to call his own
 "With shelter none; out in the streets he turns,
 "For such thine heart, for such thine home,
 "For, such as those, Thou cans't not disown".

All these years of hard manual labour with nothing to hope for, nothing to enjoy, had told on my nerves so very badly that I felt as though the very life-springs of my earthly


career had got dried up and had rendered me unfit altogether for any lively participation in any earthly concern. To me this change into an altogether new state of things in my new abode appeared highly beneficial at this juncture and I seemed to feel much less the pangs of separation from home and its homely, softening influences, as I found somewhat an opportunity now, to mix with a soft sisterly and genial set of people working there in the Asylum.

IV.

However, for all these advantages, it was only a mad house after all, and it could not be my good fortune, to enjoy those privileges for very long. There came a European soldier, just a few days after I had come, displacing me from my privileged seat, so to say, and aggrandising all care and attention from the inmates of the place to himself, by his jovial and at the same time queer habits.

Some three or four other European soldiers brought him one morning and had him admitted as a patient, in our Asylum. He came to

occupy just the room that was lying vacant by side of mine. He was a jolly good fellow no doubt, and kept us all highly amused, but so restless all the time, that he could not even sit quiet for five minutes together; always laughing, shouting, singing, dancing and what not, in his ever-so-buoyant exuberance. If any one asked him his name, he would at once say "Adam Richardson" in a single breath; if asked as to his native place, he would say "Bonny Sco'land", all in short, monosyllabic outbursts; could not talk in any lengthy connected sentences; it was all "Right turn", "Left turn", "Right wheel", "Left wheel" with him, soldier as he was and no waste of time and energy in any useless appendages of language and form: could not keep his clothes on for two minutes together and dirtied the whole room, passing urine like a horse where he stood. It took some three or four men to keep constant attendance on him, making him wear his clothes every now and again, feeding him with the very best of dishes every two or three hours, as if he were their very own dear pet. For nearly a fortnight or so he seemed to draw so much of attention and care from the



warders, nurses and all the asylum staff, that it seemed to throw us quite in the background.

It appeared to me as if they had purposely created this difference, between myself and the king's own army laddie, in order to test my grain and the stuff I was made of. My own mental condition also not having been quite in its normal state of health and poise at the time, when they began to bring the very choicest dishes from the kitchen and feed this new-comer with them, before my very eyes, I seemed to think, that the dishes were rightly meant for me and that I was being foully robbed of the choicest delicacies of diet that I was entitled to. Watching them do the same, from day to day I seemed to lose all patience and unable to bear this injustice at last, actually pounced upon the porridge bowl one morning, like a tiger on its prey and began snatching at it in my madness claiming the thing as mine. The boy that was feeding Richardson finding me so completely lost to all common sense and sense of decency, took out one of his shoes, for want of any better that he could lay hand on, at the spur of the moment; hammered a blow right on the temple of my head and quietly began feeding Richard-

son as before, as if nothing very particular had happened in the meantime. Richardson, however, could not bear to see me treated like this and asked his boy, to give away his bowl of porridge to me, but the boy paid no heed to what the soldier said and did his duty coolly. As for myself, there remained naught but to return to my cell quite like the fool that I had proved myself there.

Within a few weeks of Richardson's coming to our Asylum, I had to leave my place and shift elsewhere. But before I left, I had noticed one thing very peculiar, with regard to this soldier of ours. He appeared to get so very highly surcharged with disease germs, at times, that they appeared almost visible, hovering around his person and the very saliva that he spat on the floor, fell like a thick milky white foam, which when dry became so sticky that it could not easily be scraped out, much less swept. The most striking part of it all was that, when any flies came to sit on the spots where he had spat, he would aim at them with his index finger, as with a revolver and such were the paralysing effects of the neural exudations that seemed to radiate from his body, that

the fly that he aimed at, with his forefinger, died the very moment he thundered out in his master-tone of voice, some letter from the English alphabet such as K,P,T, and the like; as if hit hard by an electric shock. I saw him kill some four or five such flies with my own eyes. Seeing all these, I came to understand later on the reason why he was being kept constantly fed every two or three hours on such highly rich and nutritious diet at the time. It seemed very likely that he himself would have succumbed to the malignant influences of this virulent poison—the poison that could kill flies, merely by a “word hit” and at a moment’s notice, unless he were so fed and vitalised.

Within a few days of my transfer to a different cell, I got myself embroiled in a very serious case. One evening as I was sleeping in my room, one of the warders, a Mahomedan by caste, came in front of my cell and shouted, “Oh! you are sleeping at this time of day?” The noise broke my sleep and I went quite off my head as it were in anger, so that I gave the man a very severe scolding. I am sleeping in my room, what business, I thought, had this man to come and disturb me here?

"Get out, you dirty swine", I shouted, "It is none of your business, nor, your father's, to come and disturb me here in my sleep". Being a Mahomedan, the fellow in his turn went quite mad, as I called him by that objectionable name. "Well" he said "You are getting more and more fat, I see; wait, you will soon digest some of that extra stuff that is growing on you and learn your lesson quick." He called aloud for a second warder and told him to get a gunny blanket for him, which when brought, he opened the door of my room with his bunch of keys and entered; wrapped that gunny round my neck, twisting and bending it this way and that, several times, so that, I felt as though my neck broke; stretched it upwards at last, beating me most mercilessly all the time.

As he was going on like this for some time, all on a sudden I felt as if a whirl wind was passing round my neck, circling round and round, at an inconceivably high speed; the very next moment all to my wonder and amazement I felt that my head was not on its trunk! At this juncture the warder himself appeared, to get frightened out of his wits, saying, "What un-

earthly affair is this ! The head is quite blown off !!! How many lunatics have I beaten, time and again, with mine own hands, but never did I come across a thing like this, in all my life. "What did you do," he asked me—"to deserve this"? It was only for about a few seconds that I felt my head severed from the trunk and even for these few seconds, I did not lose the full possession of my senses, so that, I heard all that the warder said, quite clearly and distinctly. Moreover, as I lay a headless trunk on the floor, like the buffalo, sacrificed at the alter of goddess "Kali" or "Durga", I remembered the mythical legend, relating to the lopping off of Ganesha's head, owing to Saturn's malignant and inauspicious gaze.

This analogy seemed to give me strength and instead of finding myself thrown completely out of gear, and into an abysmal void with nothing to fall back upon, with nothing to adhere to, by way of precedence or comparison, my reason seemed able, at least to cling to this one single support, by means of which to steady itself at present, on this unstable soil. By and by as opportunity offered, it might become possible, I thought, for me to examine more

thoroughly and clearly, the underlying basis of such experiences, in the light of the most up-to-date acquisitions of modern Science. For the present I satisfied myself with the inference that it was not all for nothing, that the Pauranic legends came into being. There must have been some corroborative evidence at the background, whatever their shape or form.

It were well to note here that I was quite able to think in my mind all these thoughts, though I knew, that I lay a headless trunk, at the time, being able only to feel myself up to my neck or rather the shoulders and no more. In the meantime the head set itself back in its place, suddenly with a thud; and it appeared as though my life was being spared at last.

This peculiar experience received a second confirmation in the case of a friend of mine, some time later, to which I myself had the opportunity to stand witness and this gives me the courage to relate this most miraculous occurrence, making bold to assert the truth of its manifestations and do justice to the subject even though people may not believe in its verity, unless they find some reasonable explanation, suggestive of the possibility of such,

though there may not be a demonstration. I shall try my best to offer my explanations, however erroneous and incomplete according to the light of my own understanding, as far as I have been able to think over the subject. But not now; I defer all further explanations regarding the question till we come to the next incident that I experienced, with regard to a friend of mine, also a patient in the Asylum. The warder that brought about this cataclysm seemed to suggest that the hidden meaning underlying the Mahomedan ritual *Qurvani*, embodied this very idea, much the same way, as the story of *Ganeshà* did in our Hindoo Mythology. There is a saying in English, that to me appears very suggestive; it is, that at the time of the French Revolution "All the kings of Europe, found their heads lopped off". Of course this is only a saying and may not be true in the sense I venture to interpret it. However to return to our story.

When they removed me to a different room for the night, I seemed to feel like a camel with my neck stretched so. I did not, however, mention to the superintendent, when he came to see me next day, anything regarding

last night's incident; and sat quite doubled up in a corner. The pain that I felt all over my body, owing to the severe beating that I had received o'er night, became so acute, that it appeared trying in the extreme for me to change postures. Such was the excruciating nature of the pain I felt, that I seemed to think that it had formed pus all over my body, in a single night. The Superintendent no doubt inferred something wrong with me from what he saw, but said nothing, as it was nothing very uncommon in the Lunatic Asylum; for some one or other amongst the lunatics to get a rub-a-dub-dub, now and again; making him spin like a top, for once or twice, and yet digest his bitter morsel in neglected silence, never to forget his experience, the rest of his days alive. The superintendent of himself made all necessary arrangements for whatever creature comforts it became possible for him to give me there, making me stay with the Europeans and enjoy some of their privileges regarding diet and other necessities, though I never asked for any of them myself. Under his patient care and kind treatment as I began to recover a bit from the effects of the beating I had received; it was

ordered that I should remove to the "Criminal enclosure" and remain there.

V.

As I changed my abode to the above enclosure a third time, I met my friend referred to once previously, and it followed as a matter of course that we birds of the same feather flocked together; he also being a political prisoner sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment in connection with the Tinevelly "Ash murder case". His name was Shankar Krishna Iyar, a Brahmin by caste, sent to the Madras Asylum from the Rajmahendri jail, after he had done a certain portion of his term, but had turned off his head somewhat, in the course of his jail-life experiences. When I met him in the Madras Lunatic Asylum, he had recovered from the effects of the initial derangement and was quite a sensible man in every way. The lunatic Asylum at Madras appears to be one of the biggest of its kind in India, there being only another such in Colaba, Bombay, and a very recently started one at

Poona. It was divided into several sections, of which there was one quite separate, for the females, one for the European Civil patients, one again for the Indian Civil patients, one for the hospital ward, which was common to all, and last but not the least was the criminal enclosure, for the criminal patients.

The portion of the Asylum where I was made to lodge at first, when I came to Madras, happened to be within the Hospital ward and so did not offer me much of a chance then to meet my Tinnevely friend very often, as he had to be in a different section himself. But he managed in spite of all that, to come and see me now and again, under pretext of coming to take medicine from hospital and so forth. Now that I had got myself finally transferred to the criminal enclosure, where my friend had to put up and work, it became easier and much more convenient for both of us to mix freely and exchange ideas, that to me seemed to suggest a very significant fact. The significance of this fortuitous concourse, apart from the commonplace incidence of a friend meeting a friend in misfortune, to me appears to stand for the meeting-point that Provident arranges between a

person and a person, for the fulfilment of His all-wise designs and consequent development of both. To me this meeting seems to represent the meeting-point between two very widely divergent systems of Indian civilisation and culture that had fought against each other for predominance, ever since, in Indian history, traced even as far back as the early Vedic ages. The story of the Ramayana stands for the most convincing proof of what may be called the very culminating point in the history of the two races, depicting the very height of opposition to which one party was led against the other, in the fight that ensued between Rama the hero of the Epic, and Ravana the Rakshasa, the Aryans and the Dravidians. The effect of this struggle between the two races covering ages and ages seems to have produced such antipodal results, with regard to the cultural civilisation of both, that they have left landmarks quite clearly traceable even at the present day. I have myself traced instances in many cases in which the very diametrically opposite character of the two systems appeared quite visible even to a demonstration. It will not be possible of course to enter into a detailed analysis of the

two systems here, in this present work, in order to bring them to a vivid contrast one against the other, in support of my contention; but I shall try, however, to get out a few typical instances in brief, so as to make my point clear, as far as possible, within the short space allowable in the course of my narrative.

Let us take for instance the Aryan system of alphabets, as opposed to the Dravidian first, and we shall find ample proof of the very antithetical lines of procedure manifested in the two systems. We pronounce our consonants for instance with the help of a vowel sound that follows, which I think will hold good not only with regard to our own, but also with regard to all the rest of the systems derived from the Aryan stock, not even excepting the Greek and the Latin. But not so in Tamil. They will pronounce their consonants just the opposite way i.e. the vowel sound preceding the consonants. As for instance, in pronouncing "K", we do it with the consonant "K" followed by the vowel sound "a", whereas they will pronounce it with the vowel sound "a" or "e" generally) preceding K, which would make it sound as "ak" or "ek", So with the

rest of the consonants used in their vocabulary. This holds good only with regard to Tamil and not the rest of the branches, derived from the Dravidian stock, as for instance in Telegu, or Malyalam; they have adopted the same system of alphabets as are used in Sanskrit.

I shall give a few more typical instances and close the topic in brief. We for instance say "mukh" to denote the mouth, whereas their "mukku" signifies the nose, there being such a close relationship between the sense of taste and that of smell, as to make the one follow the other, close at heels. We again say "kan" to denote our ear, whereas their "kan" means the eyes; and here too the reason seems to me to be very suggestive. Of all our sense organs, the two most widely in use, are those of sight and hearing, the ones that are meant for distant perception. It seems very strange indeed that terms indicative of these two sense organs should also form a tie and get reversed in their meanings in the two languages, in the same way as we found, was the case with the two words "mukh" and "mukhu".

I feel inclined almost to infer from instances such as the above that the Aryans after

coming to India had in the course of their competitive ties with them, as time went on, that it seems very probable that in their choice of words suitable to their needs, either of the two parties reached at times, the very climax of strain, on the "Word-medium", or the "Shabada Brahma", as it is termed in Sanskrit, when there appeared but one word possible, between them and both must make use of the same. As a result 'word' had to separate from 'meaning' or in other words "Shabda" from "Artha" creating thereby a different level in the application of the two. The sound creating a sense on the one hand, for one party and the sense creating a sound on the other, for the other party. But the level having been disturbed at the very start, the word and the meaning produced two different, though allied results, respectively. The Dravidian Civilisation seems also to be one of the very oldest known, remnants of whose existence might be traced, even from the Vedic literature of our ancient day, in the shape of words of Dravidian origin, finding their way into the body of the Scripture. The history of the Pandyan kings that flourished in southern India and in a most

thriving condition, date as far back as the 25th or 27th century B. C. if I remember a-right; and their literature also seems to be one of the oldest known. The description of the court of Lanka in the Ramayana, shows clearly to what a height of civilisation the southern Indians had reached even in those ancient days of the "Treta Yugam."

Coming into clash with the Aryans for centuries and centuries together, it seems no wonder, that the Dravidians should have developed a system of civilisation and culture, quite antipodal in many respects to those of their opponents. To cite an instance of a similar nature from modern history, we have only to look towards America of the present day. Within a little more than a century it looks quite a miracle, how the Americans should have managed to develop within their country a system of civilisation and culture so diametrically opposed in many respects to that of the mother country they had separated from only the other day, that the contrast will appear quite palpable even to the most careless observer, in case he should try to make a comparison of the two. I shall only place one or two in-

stances, that I myself had occasion to notice, proving to us most conclusively the fact of the very opposite nature of their mental tendencies.

Some time ago I had occasion, to go to an American firm, in Calcutta, to see if it should suit me to buy a cream separator, from there. They showed me a very peculiar kind of an apparatus, which in no way resembled any that I had seen before, and the contrast to me appeared very striking. The arrangement in all the English machines that I had seen, was "gravity feed" i.e. milk had to be fed from on top, by the force of gravity; but in this machine, the arrangement appeared just the reverse, milk being fed by a suction arrangement from the bottom of the machine; as if they willingly undertook to go through all those additional complications in the machine, simply to keep up their antipodal peculiarities, by all means and at all cost, as an indication of the spite they bore against the English. Those of my readers that have any knowledge of machinery will, I think, vouch for me when I say, that if in the English-make a part should tighten when turned in the clock-wise direction or the right screw, in the American, it will do so, only when

turned in the anti-clock-wise or the left screw. It is quite clear now, I think from the above instances, how two nations out of sheer spite for each other, set to thinking and working *vis-a-vis* one against the other, often arriving most strangely at the very same results, in the long run.

VI.

There was a weaving shed within the criminal enclosure compound, where my friend Shankara Krishnā had to work; I too went there by and by and began working in one of the fly-shuttle hand-loom that I found there. Gradually I began to feel much better, as I worked, and time passed more or less smoothly with us both, as we enjoyed each other's company. Slowly and gradually I began to pick up a little Tamil with Shankar Krishna's assistance, which would have been a practical impossibility with me unless he were there, because, be that as it may with the other Indian languages that come from the same stock as ours *i.e.* Sanskrit, with regard to Tamil the question

seems entirely different, as the language happens to be derived from an entirely different stock and so very highly prejudiced a stock too against the Aryan, since the very beginning of days.

Unless I had found in him an interpreter, to explain things to me through the medium of the English language, I know how I should have fared with regard to learning that jargon of the linguistic wilderness and tautology. Still for all that, there was at least this one commendable feature with regard to modern Tamil, in as much as it has contrived to swell its 'corpus' with the help of quite a multitude of words and phrases culled from Sanskrit vocabulary and diction. Before I had met my interpreter, it was my habit, carefully to note the sprinkling of Sanskrit words that fell on my ear in the course of their conversation; and with the help of those, to construct a meaning, often totally wide of the mark and directly contradictory to what was going on; which when explained to me by some by-stander in broken English or Hindustani, made me laugh often quite heartily at the ingenuity and skill with

which I had managed to arrive at conclusions, so fanciful, verging often on the ludicrous.

I was passing my time more or less at ease and comfort in the criminal enclosure, while a warder came one evening from the hospital and wanted me to go with him there. When asked as to the reasons why, he told me that I was ill and the Supdt. wanted me to go to hospital. It all sounded so very funny and I could not help laughing at the idea; I myself knew nothing as to my illness and yet the superintendent knew it; what could be more wonderful than this? I asked the man again, "What could be my illness, pray"? "Ugh! how could you be so cross? when the Supdt. has given the order, you must have got cough cold or some such ailment at least; there could be no doubt about it; don't be silly but do what I say, come on and make haste." It seemed useless to argue with the man, after all he had said and I had to follow him perforce.

When I reached the hospital; they put me in a big special class room and wanted me to lie down on an easy chair, as if I were suffering from some very serious illness. The very

idea was absurd and I would not do what they wanted of me; but then, they must have their own way also and would not let me alone. So, in their eagerness to make me comply with their wishes, a warder and a nurse combined, started almost a wrestling match with me, in order to make me lie down; but it was no easy job, even for them both to prevail against me and I continued to keep both at bay for some time. Tired at last, they came to realise that it was no use against me, when I had made it a point not to yield; so that there followed a compromise and I was allowed to keep sitting erect on the chair, instead of being felled flat altogether, as was their intention, at first.

In the meantime, the super-natural made its appearance at the next door. The very same brother that had met me on our way while leaving the Andamans, now appeared here also; and as I turned to look in the direction from which I seemed to hear his voice coming, it struck me as something quite inexplicable as to how his form appeared so plainly visible to me, even though there were a good many rooms in between us, with their brick-walls intercepting. This time it was not that

ragamuffin picture of poverty, that we had met last time, but quite a gentleman in a full suit of European clothes, talking and shilly-shallying with another, a girl, also European; who I inferred might be the very girl that we had heard, he had married in England. My readers will note here that, ever since that first meeting in the Andamans, my notions as to my brother being in England had got quite changed, so that I believed him as I said once before—to have taken to a life of adventure, keeping up by a clever manipulation of the postal service, the story of his being in England, through the medium of some friend of his own, that I thought might be there; but in fact he himself was not there at all.

This time too when I saw him in Madras, my conviction seemed to find a second confirmation; I seemed to think that the story of his having married in England was a clever fabrication of his and had no basis in fact. He had only married a European or a Eurasian girl from somewhere near about and had made known to our people at home, that he had done so in England only.

Having played their tricks in this way for

some time, they turned to go and I seemed to see that there was Dr. Sundari Mohan Das's son Premananda also with them. He seemed to appear to me like the Salvation Army soldiers, dressed in the manner of the people amongst whom they worked and so had clothed himself in Malabar fashion, with a Dhoti wrapped round his loin, like a 'lungi'; without the tail end or the 'Kachcha' as is the custom with the Bengalees. When they approached the main gate, they found it bolted against them and did not know what to do; my brother (?) seemed to suggest that as they were not made of our ordinary earthly mould, what earthly barrier could dare keep them confined within its narrow limits, if they should choose to free themselves. But Premananda (?) stopped him, as he thought that it would not be strictly in accordance with rule, if they made good their disappearance openly, in broad day-light, before so many people, and thereby disclosed all the secret mystery, under cover of which it became possible for them to appear and disappear as they liked. Accordingly he managed to call aloud for a warder by name, as if from his sub-conscious plane, like one in a state of trance,

(because it could not have been possible, that the earthly Premananda known to us should have known the warder by name) and so the warder came and opened the gates for them, which when done, they both went out and breathed the breath of life once more so to say in their own normal plane.

We had had no conversations between us that time, but only recognised each other from a distance.

VII.

As I was keeping in hospital for some time in the usual way, the Dy. Superintendent came one evening and called on me; he had some more visitors also that came with him to see me. "Look, here, Mr. Dutt, can you recognise them?" he asked, pointing to the other visitors that came with him. I looked around and saw greatly to my astonishment and surprise, the figures of my revered parents with him. What undreamed of blessing, it was to me, to meet them there, quite unexpectedly so to say, after years of separation, my readers can well

understand and it is needless for me to describe in detail. After the Dy. Superintendent had left, trying to cheer me up a bit, on this happy turn of fate, we exchanged hearty greetings and enquired of each other all the 'news' that we could in a hurry, and before parting for the day, I asked them regarding my younger brother of whom I felt very curious indeed and wanted to know what they thought as to his whereabouts. They said that he was still in England and was doing quite well there. "How could he be in England"? I asked, "I saw him here only the other day". They looked quite amazed at the thought of such an absurdity! but could not make any meaning out of all that I said. However, they had made arrangements to come and see me twice every week, as long as they remained in Madras, which would be nearly a month in all and so took leave of me till we should meet again next time.

Later on they brought with them my younger brother's photo, one, that he had sent from England, together with those of his wife and child in a group, and also some of the letters that he had written from there, in order

to convince me as to his being in England. All those, however, could in no way change my conviction one way or the other and only helped to make confusion worse confounded. I really did not know what to make of all this puzzle. On the one hand was my brother's photo and letters, on the other, his vivid and material presence in broad day-light; both, weighty arguments, on either side, I could not make up my mind to decide in favour of ~~one~~ or the other, and so left the puzzle as it was; but if any one asked me regarding my brother, I used to say that he was in England, but could not say that outright, as if something stuck to my throat, when I wanted to say so.

Considering all these things I am of opinion that for each positive entity on the worldly side of things there must be a negative entity or a non-entity on the "unworldly" side; and the deduction follows as a matter of consequence from the general law of physics that runs "Every action has its equal and contrary reaction." Of course, this proposition will only hold good and give for each positive the exact negative, in case, no third entity or force came into play, disturbing the uniformity of

the reaction thereby, in which case there will arise shades and grades of the negative in all its diverse angularities of shape and form, as in the case of light reflected when compared to light refracted.

Though of course in theory, every action, has its equal and contrary reaction, in practice it does not appear feasible, as there are thousand and odd other considerations arising on the way; and we do not as a rule get the exact reaction or the negative, that the theory suggests. So I would class the super-natural manifestations that I have been describing so long, amongst the refractory reactions and not the reflectory, as in that case, the real and the unreal, the positive and the negative would have tallied with each other point for point, so as to show in the unreal or the unearthly the very exact duplicate of what was happening in the real or the earthly.

So far for the theory at present, we shall have more of it by and by. Let us now proceed with our story. When father and mother left Madras after visiting me twice a week, for one full month, I had to come back to the criminal enclosure once again. It was because

of the information that the Superintendent received, as to my parents coming to see me, that he had ordered my transfer to hospital for that one month and not for any whimsicalities of his own, it seems plain now. This time also when I came back to the criminal enclosure, I busied myself working in the weaving shed. From morning till evening I used to work there, taking only a short respite during meal-time, but there being no compulsion in the present instance, the work became a pleasant task, instead of a drudgery, that it used to be in the Andamans.

One morning as I was just preparing to go to my work, I saw some three or four women coming towards us from the direction of the gates. As they came by our weaving shed, I stood aside a little and they entered; I kept standing at the door and they passed on to the extreme end of the shed, where-from they turned and were about to return when by chance my eyes fell on one that seemed

very particular about me. As soon as she saw that I was standing at some distance from her, she appeared to rush towards me, arms stretched and in a single breath as it were, and wanted to hold my hands within her own, in a warm clasp, but could not, as there appeared some impassable film of mental fluid in between us, that would not allow of such contact. This 'very fine film of fluid matter played the part of a very effective solvent with regard to her bodily form and appeared the more to dissolve her figure the more she tried to approach me. We have all experienced I think a peculiar catatonising influence, some time or other in our dreams, when it looked quite impossible for us, to free ourselves from the clutches of some horrible monster, or beast, as it appeared to chase us, though we tried our level best to run and run for the sake of our dear lives. Here too the phenomenon seems to resemble that very catatonising tendency we experience, some times in our dreams. Though I have at times been able to touch other celestial personages as they appeared before me, it was not possible for me to touch this particular personage, possibly, because she was a female, whereas the

others were males. Moreover, there seems to be another and more vital reason in the present instance, that debarred me from touching her, even though both the parties appeared so very eager to do so. Of all our senses the touch sense being the most material, it is also the most direct method for the transmission of power by conduction. We also know that of all our earthly relations, that between man and woman, being the strongest and the most attached, ^{namely} as is the case between two opposite kinds of electricity or the two opposite poles of a magnet, it was considered seriously prejudicial to the interests of the earthly person or persons concerned, to allow a touch contact between individuals not belonging to the same plane and so the general laws of nature intervened, in order to prevent an undesirable conduction, for the preservation of both. In the case of the other Super-natural personages that I had happened to touch, the question appeared not so vital, as there could not be any very serious conduction of power between persons not so very keenly attached to each other, nor between persons belonging to the same sex, as is the case

between the same kinds of electricity or the same poles of magnets.

Tired at last she had to give up the attempt, saying "No, this won't do". I looked up and lo! it was she once again. It was that very intimate one of mine, that I had met once in the Andamans. This time there was no thatch wall between to separate us, so that she appeared before me openly, in broad day-light. She appeared a bit taller than what she used to be and the cut of her face assumed somewhat of an oval shape. She was wearing a pink "Sari" with green ornamental lines of callico-print on it and had a pair of imitation gold bangles on, to cover the nakedness of her arms, with a pair of imitation gold eardrops also, that I had seen her wear before, in her ears, in days gone by, the only difference being, that the drops that she wore now, appeared somewhat bigger in size than the ones she used to wear before. Her companions all belonged to Madras, as I could infer from the manner of their dress. We both looked at each other quite confounded as it were for some time and then came out of the shed, all of us, in order, that we might hold converse with each other

more at our case. In the course of the conversation that followed, she alone talked to me, all in English, and it looked quite a marvel of achievements, as I noticed, that she had learnt so well to talk in a language, that she was not very much used to before and within so short a time. I however kept mute all along, nodding assent or dissent as the case might be; she having done all the talking herself.

It seems necessary to note here that during all conversations, between myself and any of the celestials that chanced to appear before me, I had to keep myself perfectly mute, nodding assent or dissent only as mentioned above, while all the talk had been done by themselves. The reason why this should have been so, appears to me to be, due to a difference of level or tension between the earthly and the super-earthly. All this, however, I did not understand then, or else there could have been no delusive effect on me, taking them for real earthly personages. Although I had to keep myself altogether mute in such conversations, I felt no difficulty whatsoever in making myself understood by them, nor in understanding them myself either. It appeared as though, they

managed to snatch away from me, whatever I had to say, just at the right moment, and placed that, before me, exactly in the language in which I would have put it myself, so that, a shake of the head or a twitch of the eye-lash suggestive of assent, dissent or surprise, sufficed for my purpose.

After having talked to me in this way for some time, they prepared to move and when they reached the gates by a roundabout path, I also approached there; and as I was watching them from a distance, the European warder from the guard-room, near the gates, asked me regarding the girl in pink, as to who she was. I really did not know what to say and only smiled, just to give him the chance for making to his own guess. This European warder happened to be a Christian, belonging to the Eurasian community in Madras and used to be very kind and friendly to me, treating me like his own younger brother. He guessed my meaning from the smile I gave, and said, "I understand what you mean, she is your fiance; but you are making a mistake, they are not earthly beings." I, however, could not understand, how they could be anything other than

earthly, and gave no heed to what he said. She must have managed, I thought, to come here the very same way as she had done once before while I was in the Andamans.

As they were moving past the gates, I could not help keeping my eager eyes feasting on her ever so endearing form, as long as they appeared visible from where I stood. It appeared to me as if they i.e. "she" in particular could not bear the intensity of my gaze due to the longing in my eyes for her form, so that she had at last to request me not to be looking at them so eagerly; giving me the assurance that we would meet now and again and that there was no reason for me to despair. This assurance gave me strength and I returned to my work. Just a few days after this incident she appeared for the next time one evening before my cell, after we had all got locked up in our respective cells or rooms. None of her companions came with her this time, so that she was all alone by herself. This time too, I had to play the mute in the course of the conversation that followed and she did the talking. "How long was such a state of things to continue?" I asked. There was at least some

chance of our getting married and settling in life somehow, even as a Ticket of leave, had we continued to remain in the Andamans; but here it being a Lunatic Asylum, such an arrangement was beyond comprehension, and entirely out of the question. Considering these disadvantages I advised her to seek out some job somewhere and try to pull on, inspite of all obstacles that might come on the way; so that, if chance should offer any time, never mind even if it should mean after the expiry of the full twenty years term, that I was bound down for servitude, we shall join hands some happy day, never to part again.

It is quite plain I think from the purport of my suggestions that I had taken her for the real earthly person, that I loved and supposed her to be in Madras. She, however, tried now and again to explain her real nature to me, but it all sounded a meaningless jargon and I could give to her explanations, no better worth, than an attempt at making some fun with me. It looks so very strange to note that though I had already got convinced once, regarding the existence of a super-natural world that made its appearance now and again on our earthly plane,

while in Andamans, yet all these experiences were of no avail to me here, and I could not put two and two together to make a meaning out of all what she said. I seemed to have totally forgotten everything regarding my previous experiences, as could have helped me to understand their real nature; and remembered only those that tended to prolong their delusive effects on me. As for instance, in this case, I remembered quite clearly the previous occasion when I had chanced to meet her in the Andamans, and connected that to these visits in Madras, but nothing more; so that the delusion remained unchanged in both cases and I took her for the same earthly personage as went to the Andamans, to have come to Madras again. It seemed quite out of the question, at the time, to impute to her gross material figure in flesh and blood, any qualities other than earthly. Since then I began to assume that she was putting up somewhere nearabout and came to visit me now and again as she could manage. This sort of a notion seemed to get hold of me by and by, regarding many others, amongst my friends and acquaintances, not even excepting father and mother after they had left Madras.

By and by, I seemed to feel as if the whole of my mental sky had got suffused with their presence and so it all led me to think of them as if they had all come over to Madras and were living somewhere near by, just in the vicinity of our Asylum. At that time I had no clear notions as to the nature and laws that worked in the astral plane and so made a queer muddle of them all, ascribing to them our ordinary earthly properties.

My reasoning in this case also, was very simple, almost childish. Ordinarily as we infer this presence of a particular person somewhere near-by, when we happen to hear his voice, or in the same way as we do not hesitate to infer the presence of a particular thing, in the vicinity somewhere, when we chance to get a particular kind of smell, so also I thought, when I appeared to feel the presence of any particular person in my mental plane, that, as the mental presence was so apparent, the physical must also be somewhere near only; otherwise, how could it make itself felt? And to speak the truth, I really do not know how I could have got rid of this false notion, unless I had chanced to obtain my release and so found the oppor-

tunity to put what was actually going on outside as against what I had imagined. However, during the earlier stages of my experience in these lines, these false notions, inspite of their falsity, appeared in a great measure consoling to my mind, in as much as they saved me from the loneliness and monotony of a life of confinement, bereft of all softening and enlivening influences of a genial and friendly company. But by and by, as this extraordinary world began to send its roots deeper and deeper into my mental constitution, the effects seemed to turn out more and more prejudicial to my earthly interests.

IX.

Now, let us consider the characteristic peculiarities that differentiate the earthly from the unearthly and we shall find some clue to a clearer grasp and a better handling of the problems that arise out of those peculiarities. First of all we find that in order to be able to get born to our earthly sphere, there is only one door open to us and that is, by way of the matrix. It becomes necessary for the human nucleus or the *jeeva*, to complete his full ten

months' term, within the mother's womb, before it can get its entry-ticket to our world. But no such rule seems binding on the celestials when they appear before us; and why? We come to this world, born in our naked simplicity of baby-hood, slowly and gradually, developing into a child in swaddling or fancy clothes, as the case may be, passing by and by the three stages of youth, manhood, and old age, all by slow and imperceptible degrees, whereas, they seem to appear before us, the full man all at once, clothed and garmented already, in decent attire. How is that? Why this difference? That they should appear quite in visible tangible form, with all the terrestrial properties of matter quite palpably manifest in them, and yet, how should it be, that they should not in any way appear subject to the material laws that control our earthly phenomena? If such a state of things should seem possible, then I should say, woe to all our material scientists and woe to all their tall talk! But should we be able to say so, in spite of all that the material sciences have done for us? I think not; there must be some clue towards a reconciliation between these two apparently

contradictory worlds, or else, there could not have been the slightest chance of one coming to know of the other; the two would have kept wide of each other's boundary, never to meet. Let us now try to find out where the harmony lies. First of all if we analyse the forces that are working in nature, we find that they fall mainly under two distinct heads, viz., the centrifugal and the centripetal; and if we further stretch the application of these two, even into the Solar system, they may be made to stand for the two widely known forces, such as, our terrestrial gravity and the solar gravitation. By virtue of the centrifugal force, all terrestrial matter tends towards the centre of the earth and by virtue of the centripetal all such matter is tending to move away from the earth, in a tangential direction, from its surface, due to its high-speed rotatory motion. It is as a result of this tendency, we find, that our earth has got bulged out at the equatorial belt, and depressed at the poles.

It is only because the two forces work in a way as to balance the effects of both, it becomes possible for all terrestrial matter to keep in their places as they are, without being

jutt^{ed} out or sucked in one way or the other. Though this law holds good with regard to all inert substances in general, the animate world, however, does not appear wholly and entirely subject to those forces. They seem to stand intermediate between the two; and by bringing into play a third force which stands for their individual or collective will, they appear to live and move, more or less, as masters and not as subjects to those forces.

Now, if we try to understand the nature and work of this third entity, we shall, I think, be able to arrive at some reasonable solution of our problem. For arguments' sake let us divide this will into two component parts, namely, the terrestrial and the celestial, or the *Jeeva* and the *Iswara*, in the same way as we find in the material world,—there are the centrifugal and the centripetal forces, or the forces of gravity and gravitation. Though the “Jeeva” can by exerting a certain amount of its free will shape and mould the material forces working in nature, according to its individual needs, to a certain extent, its powers seem limited in a great measure by the terrestrial inertia of matter. We have already seen that in order to get born

in our earthly sphere, it becomes absolutely necessary for the "Jeeva" to reside within the mother's womb for quite a lengthy period, covering over full ten months; and why? The reason is simply this,—he has got to acquire for himself the full terrestrial inertia of matter, in order to last him for the period he is expected to reside here, or for which period he has obtained his lease of tenancy on the earthly plane by coming into a long-continued and intimate contact with terrestrial matter, previously animated within the parental anatomy any physiology, so as to induce their terrestrial properties on to his own, by a simple process of induction or conduction as the case may be. Here again, on the one hand, as he gains an advantage from the terrestrial inertia of matter, that makes him fit to reside on earth; on the other he seems to lose much of the celestial omnipotence of his will, due to the influence terrestrial matter begins to exert on him. As a result he becomes the "jeeva", that comes to earth, with a very limited supply of will power, that will allow him only a very limited scope for its application. The Celestial will or the will of the Iswara, again, being in a great

measure free from the earthly inertia of matter, can show a much greater independence and a much wider application of its powers, when needed. But here too we will do well to note, that as the Celestials can on the one hand exert a much greater and a much wider power of will on a particular point at a particular time, on the other they seem much less able to persist themselves in matters earthly, when compared to the "jeeva", that has managed to get born to it, because of their want of the requisite inertia in such matters.* It is because of this reason only, we found that the celestials, whenever they had managed to appear on our earthly plane by an artificial exertion of their will, contrary to the terrestrial mode of making one's appearance on earth, they could only make time, for a very short stay here, before they had to give way to the natural and more permanent forces that prevailed on earth. Now, let us try to analyse the conditions that make for the relative Omnipotence or the Omnipresence of the Celestial will, or the will of the Iswara. If we can deduce our inferences from the general material laws that we happen to be more or less conversant with, then alone, I think we shall

be able to have a somewhat comprehensive grasp of our subject, by nature so abstruse as to baffle our imagination in its efforts at forming any very definite idea regarding its ultimate character.

• I shall first of all try to draw my inferences from a very simple fact of nature, that can easily be understood by all. If we tie a piece of brick, or stone, at the end of a piece of rope, a few yards long and holding it by the other begin to revolve it round and round, the time taken by the brick end of my rope, in making a complete revolution around my person, will be the same, as that taken by the end, I am holding in my hand and yet how different appears the speed between the two ends. If we apply this very simple instance in the case of our earth's diurnal rotation round its own axis, we shall find that the more we approach the earth's centre or the axis, the less will be the speed with which its particles should be moving, and the more the inertia; so also, vice versa, *i.e.* the more we move away from the centre, the greater appears the speed with which particles of matter move in space and the less the inertia. From this it is easy to infer, that

at the extreme end of the peripheral circumference of the total mass of the earth, within the action of the force of gravity, or in other words, the total mass earthly matter with its fifty miles of atmosphere and so forth, that is partaking of the diurnal and annual rotations of the Earth, the speed of motion or the state of tension will be infinitely greater than what it happens to be at the Earth's surface.

Let us now consider the effects of this extreme difference of tension, at the two levels. Of course, we must admit that though we partake of the motions of the earth, we do not feel that, in relation to our earth, but have to infer so, with reference to the other heavenly bodies. We must also admit that though we may not feel any motion relative to the earth, the motion gets induced into our system all the same; as in the case of a passenger travelling in a railway train does not feel any motion relative to the other fellow passengers, or the train itself, but acquires a new dynamic force, all the same, however unconsciously, which could be proved to a demonstration, if he were to fall from that moving train all on a sudden and strike at some person or persons standing

on the ground. It will be found that he will not only bring to bear his own on the person or persons, on whom he fell but something more; and by far a much stronger and a many times more multiplied force would be his, that had got itself induced in him, quite unconsciously and without effort. It is therefore, a necessary concomitance from the above, that at the extreme end of the centripetal tension, the Dynamic properties material particles possessed, shall be of an extreme character also; so that the Will that should work from there, must necessarily be supposed to possess, extreme dynamic powers, which when compared to the one that worked at the surface level of the Earth, may safely be said to possess infinitely higher potentialities, to which the distances of time and space are as nothing practically. The earthly Will cannot be said to possess that power, though of course, modern science has contrived to minimise the distances of time and space somewhat, with the help of modern scientific inventions and designs. But these scientific improvements are the results of strenuous efforts and long experience on the part of the earthly, whereas for the Celestial will, to

minimise the distances of time and space requires no such effort and is but a natural property inborn. A mere thought, a mere act of that will and they seem to be at once far and near.

The next question that arises regarding these super-natural manifestations, is that, referring to the forms they assume while appearing on the earthly plane. How should it be, that, while a particular person is residing in a particular part of our planet, his very form, in all his individual peculiarities should appear in a different part, at the same time? The question appears very puzzling at first, but a little reflection will show, that to an Omnipotent and Omnipresent will or mind, it does not appear at all difficult. Now, we shall try to show from a very commonplace example taken from the science of optics. We all know perhaps, that if we place two mirrors facing each other, one before and one behind, keeping ourselves in the middle, there appears an infinite series of reflections one after another, reproducing our form in a similar series of mirrors, placed at regular distances. Now, if we place similar pairs of mirrors on all sides, there will

necessarily appear myriads of such reflections radiating in all directions, like Raja Dasharatha's chariot that was supposed to drive in ten different directions *i.e.* in every direction. Here the form that is reproduced is only perceptible to the visual sense, being a light reflection, that could only be perceived by our eyes. We cannot touch the form that is reflected in the mirror before us, so, it could not be said to represent me in every respect. If instead of a mirror that could reflect only a single aspect of our entire personality, we imagined a mirror that could reflect us in all the different aspects of our individual personalities and placed such of them on all sides, what would have been the effect produced? Indeed, we should find ourselves infinitely multiplied, so as to cover all space with our individual prototypes.

Now let us see if such a thing could be made possible. We all know that our mind is a reflector, and such a reflector, as could reproduce us in all the different varieties of aspects, that we are supposed to represent, which fact, if not quite apparent at first sight, could be inferred from our experiences in dream states, when we find ourselves quite in a visible tangible

world of its own, as real, for the time we are dreaming, as the one we find ourselves in, during our waking states. Now, if this reflector could be so adjusted as to give a true reflection of what is happening on earth instead of giving a confused medley of impressions, that it does, in our ordinary dream states, our problem seems solved. But there arises this difficulty again, with regard to the infinite variety of individuals, that we find ourselves in the midst of. According to my proposition, if arrangements were made as suggested, there should have been only one single individual, infinitely multiplied, so as to cover the whole of creation; but in reality we find that this is not so, and why? The reason seems to be this, that though collectively speaking all individuals merge into an all-encompassing individuality, yet individually speaking, there are individuals and individuals, each distinctly separate from every other. There is a synthetic principle that runs throughout eternity, merging all differences into a single whole, as well as an analytic principle, running concurrent with it, that is always trying to differentiate and dissect the central unity, into its component variety of individual principles,

leading them through eternity, according to their individual lines of growth and development. From this, it seems quite apparent that for every individual in the foreground, that appears limited by his earthly limitations, there must be an unlimited background, free from all earthly limitations; i.e., to say, for every individual "Jeeva" aspect, there is his Iswara aspect at the background. This seems also to be the meaning of what the Sankhyas say. Now I think our problem is somewhat clear. We have found already, that, as there is the central unity, limitless and vast, that stands for "The Iswara", at the back of all variety and limitation, there is also the "Unlimited Variety", or the individual Iswaras also Omnipresent and Omniscient; feeding and maintaining each individual variety on its individual line of progress through Eternity. In case such an individual Iswara should choose to adjust this mirror of his mind on his temporal representative on earth, it seems no wonder that he shall reproduce duplicates, or multiples of that person wherever and whenever necessary, to act for him in visible tangible form, possessed

as he is of that Dynamic potentiality, which we have already shown before.

There is one other matter which we will do well to understand regarding the Omnipresence we have talked of in our preceding discussions. As for the physical or inorganic world, every one knows that there is the omnipresent ether, that is supposed to be the basis of all physical or inorganic matter. This ether though omnipresent, is but a physical entity devoid of all sentience. There seems to be another kind of ether, that could be termed sentient ether, which is both omnipresent and omniscient at the same time; the one that serves to animate the organic world and whose omnipresent and omniscient character could not be denied at the present day, as our modern sciences have established the truth of its existence from observations in matters, such as, animal-electricity, animal magnetism, telepathy, thought-reading and so forth, which are clearly indicative of such a medium in the midst of which the animal world lives, moves, and has its being. It is this very sentient or animal ether, that by communion with inert material substances, induces its

sentient or life properties in them, imbibing their inertia in return.

While discussing the nature of the manifestations of the unseen world in material form, the question arose in my mind, as to how or wherefrom should the unseen manage to get the materials they required for making their appearance in visible tangible form, though only for so short a period even admitting all their dynamic power of will and the rest of it, unless they found in space, live sentient matter in some form or other, however fine in constitution. It is for this reason only that it becomes necessary for me to enter into a discussion regarding the two kinds of ether, which represent in many respects the Purusha and Prakriti of our Hindu Philosophy. All animal organisms seem to give out a sort of finer animal particles or "Jeevatanmatras" from them, filling space incessantly with their presence like the flower that gives out its fragrance even at a distance. With the help of these live particles it appears, the celestials manage to incorporate their forms, with a material organic mould, resembling in every respect our earthly matter, but made up of a much finer essence, so as to

delude our physical senses by its startling similarities of form and out-look.

If we give to our earthly forms, the positive designation, we may give to the unearthly the negative; as in the case of a photograph and its negative plate. The one is an impression due to the positive effects of different shades of light, and the other, the with-holding of those shades from uniform background. Every one knows that those places that appear dark on the negative, appear as white on the print and vice-versa, and yet both represent the same form or figure. Modern improvements in the photographic art, have so facilitated the method of taking an impression, that a form or figure, could now-a-days, be made to appear in all its shades and grades of natural colour, in the negative and print. A form may be made to show itself on a block by raising it, from its base, or may also be made to show, by hollowing it out from the base. In this very same way, we could imagine corresponding to the entire range of our sense perceptions on the earthly side, an exact negative on the unearthly side which would mean a perfect balance to steady both, apart from the refractory reproduc-

tions, that give rise to an infinite variety of shades and grades viewed at from an infinite variety of angles and poses. Of course, it does not become possible for us to perceive both the positive and the negative at the same time, generally speaking; but only those of us can do so, who stand mid-way between the two, forming the connecting link as it were that joins the two component parts to make a whole. Our "Sanatana Ashwathwam" or the "Norse Igdrasil" with its roots upwards and branches down, seems to suggest this very idea of a reflection or reversal. What becomes visible to us during the day time, appears quite dark to the owl and so also vice versa; as things begin to appear visible to the owl in the darkness of the night, they begin to disappear from our view as night approaches. But there is another kind of an animal that stands mid-way between the two; adapting its eyes both for darkness as well as light according as need be, as for instance the cat family. We have so far tried to arrive at a reasonable explanation regarding the so many, curious and altogether astonishing facts that took us by surprise so long and I think the

results that we have obtained by our investigations, have not been altogether unsatisfactory.

X.

We shall now try to relate the next incident hinted at, once before, in connection with the "lopping-off-my-head" affair. One morning I could not be quite definite why, I seemed to feel greatly annoyed with my Tinnevelly friend, for having seen some vague "durnimittyam" as it is called in Sanskrit, which means evil sights in English. Calling him aside to a corner, I began scolding my friend very severely. It would be at about nine or half past nine in the morning, that I called him; it was clear daylight, under the open sky, so that there could not possibly have been any the slightest chance for either of us seeing any delusive phantasms. As I was going on scolding him in my stentorian and authoritative tone of voice, suddenly my friend shouted "It is coming!" But before I could understand his meaning and pay heed to his caution, something came from, no body knew where and in a trice the head was not on his trunk.

In a preceding and similar instance, my readers will remember how I myself had felt my head severed from the trunk as I was lying down on the floor, receiving the beating from the warder. In this present case my friend happened to be in his standing posture, and when this thing happened, he was about to fall, but I held him tight by my left hand, so that he kept standing and did not fall. Those that have any knowledge of our Hindoo Tantras must have got some idea, regarding the figure of "Chhinnamasta" i.e., the Headless Goddess—one amongst the ten different aspects of the Mother of the Universe known as the "Dasha Maha Vidya". In this present case my friend seemed to resemble that very symbolical figure I have just mentioned. The headless trunk standing firm in an upright pose, some invisible force circling around the neck at an almost incomprehensibly high speed, baffling all my efforts at fixing my gaze on what was going on around the severed portion so as to be able to understand the nature of the phenomenon I observed. Three very distinct spray lines shot upwards at the sky, just as we find in the picture of our Tantric "Maha

Vidya''; the very sight appeared quite inexplicable and awe-inspiring. To me, however, the phenomenon was not what might be called entirely new, but yet, the very startling character of this rare and uncommon occurrence completely baffled all my efforts at probing into its inner depths, so that I might examine the underlying reasons that, lay at the back of all this.

The question may arise here, as to whether there was any bleeding that could be seen resulting from this severance of the head. To this I must say that there was none and the spray lines that shot out from the thoracic cavity, though faintly colored red, could not be called blood actually, but some aeriform fluid that might mean blood in its nascent but vaporised condition within the cover of some fine transparent film of matter, such as would safeguard the sensitive and susceptible material from being exposed to our physical atmosphere. A few seconds more and the head set back to its place suddenly with a thud, as it was in my case, but so quick was the transformation, that it failed me in every way to follow the process, though I was all eyes watching at the time. When the head had set back to its place, we both felt a

relief that words fail to express; a dead weight seemed lifted from our chests, and we could breathe freely once more. My friend suggested that his head was hiding inside of mine all along. What fun! I thought, and could not help laughing even in my consternation. We both eyed each other and did not know what to think of this unearthly business. As for my friend, this was only his first experience and no wonder that he should find himself quite at sea, as to why and how such a miracle should have made its appearance from some unseen world, baffling and upsetting all our earthly calculations hitherto understood? I, however, could not help trying to find some reason for this uncalled for magic and have thought a good deal over the matter ever since my first experience, but still I must admit, that I have not as yet been able to understand clearly the rationale of the occurrence. However, I shall try to place before my readers all that I have thought and deduced from my experience, as clearly as I can manage.

First of all I must ask my readers to bear in mind the fact that there are two very distinct processes known, of the transmission of power in nature, from one source to another namely

induction" and conduction", of which the second is the most direct and readily effective. Now, let us proceed. In the present instance, if it is assumed that I appeared to serve for the charged medium, from whom power was transmitted to the nearest *i.e.*, my friend in question, it may be asked, whether transmission was by the first process *i.e.*, induction, or by the second *i.e.*, conduction. In answer, I have to say, that at the very first, when I called my friend from where I found him, I went and caught hold of him by one of his arms and brought him to the corner where I began the scolding. So it follows, that if I happened to have been charged from the very first, conduction could have taken place at the very beginning; moreover in the course of the discussion that followed between my friend and myself, it could not be denied, that I touched him now and again with my hands, but when the climax of it all came, topping off the head in a whirlpool current of invisible yet visible fluid matter, there happened to have been no touch contact between us. I am inclined to infer from this, that transmission took place by means of both the processes; conduction having raised the electric condition

in my friend comparatively to a higher level, it paved the way for induction to take place between the two highly charged sources, in which process, the unseen, commanded the field.

- Apart from the induction and conduction there were two other factors that in my opinion had something to do in this business, which also we shall do well to consider. One was the piercing gaze with which we eyed each other, and the other, the use of sounds that we made in our controversy.
- As to the first, there is a great resemblance in its effects, to the mythical allegory relating to the severance of Ganesha's head ascribed to the inauspicious gaze of Saturn or Shani. There
- is another such example in the case of Bhashma Lochana that we find in the legends of the Ramayana, where it is said, that as soon as Bhashma Lochana cast his eyes on any person, the poor fellow got burnt to ashes. Such seems to be the piercing and dazzling character of the gaze when it gets charged with some invisible power that possibly fills the space with its presence. Of course, every one knows now-a-days, the effects of light on material substances

in changing their allotropic condition which takes effect more or less according to the sensitiveness of the substance under question, so that the change effected will differ in degree according to the degree of sensitiveness in the substance brought under the rays of light.

Next comes the question of sound. Sound also we know sets up a vibration in material substances; so that, by a skilful manipulation of highly vibrant and at the same time brittle substances such as glass and the like, sound could be made to show such detonating effects on them, as will crack or even pulverise the thing, when a particular note, tone or pitch is reached, communicating its vibrations to the thing under treatment. There are other examples also that could be cited in support of my contention, that go to prove that the effects of vibration when they reach a certain intensity or amplitude could be so disastrous on certain sensitive and highly explosive materials, such as nitro-glycerine and the like, that instances have been recorded, where whole ships have been blown up due to their explosions simply because of their having been sent for transit, filled in highly vibrant tin canisters, in a liquid

state, which is so susceptible to vibratory impetus. I have already given an instance somewhere previously, where we have seen flies killed, merely by the utterance of certain alphabetical sounds at a roaring pitch and thundering tone by a soldier, while pointing towards them each time, with his index finger, as with a revolver. During the discussion that arose between us, mine having been the aggressive part and my friend's the defensive, it naturally enough followed that my voice and tone rose very often to what we might call the commanding and the force of stress with which I said my say, was much greater than that of my friend. It appeared almost visible to me, that after each charge and response, my friend appeared the weaker of us two; as if my utterances fell on him like so many bomb-shells, blowing up with them bubbles from his facial visage leaving him thinner and thinner every time. So far for the effects of sound in our present case.

Now the question arises as to how should such a miracle take place, when under ordinary circumstances, we find that no such thing happens, even in the case of the most contested

and the most heated of discussions, where the effects of touch, sound and those of light appear practically the same as vouchsafed for the miracle? In answer I have to say, that though the conditions seem apparently the same in both cases, yet we believe, that there arises a difference, due to what we call "Sthhana Mahatmayam" in Sanskrit *i.e.*, due to the difference in the electrical conditions of the places under comparison, to which we will come by and by. First of all it would be sheer foolishness on our part, if we were to believe that the tremendous manifestation of power that we have observed in our present case, was merely the effect of ordinary touch, sound, or light, or even all the three combined. They only served as an incentive for some unseen agent imposing itself on us, from regions quite beyond the pale of limited knowledge. Still for all that, though it was the unseen only that worked out the miracle in all appearance, it will be interesting to note that it became at the same time necessary that there should have been the temporal incentive also, however insignificant but for which, it could not have been possible for the beyond to make its appear-

ance as it did. But for the finite, there could not have been the infinite, but for the "jeeva" there could not have an "Iswara," all these being relative terms and so interdependent on each other. Who does not feel exalted when he ponders over the fact that though he may appear as the merest non-entity, a mere speck of an individual, in the midst of all this immensity of a stupendous creation, limitless and vast, enclosing within its folds so many different systems, so many millions of stars, each they say a complete solar system millions and millions of miles apart in space, yet how exalting the idea, that of this very immensity he forms an integral part, a mere speck though he be, but for whom all this luxuriant display, all those rich jewellery and paraphernalia of a diamond-bedecked canopy, studded with the richest array of planets and planetoids, forming a shiny choir all over the blue heavens, making music in all their multitudinous configurations and orbital dances—all this would have been a meaningless jargon, all this a mere nothing.

My readers I think have followed me throughout in all the arguments that I have used so long and know that I have tried to

explain matters throwing the major portion of the burden on some unseen agent. Now, if any one should ask me here "if it is possible for this unseen agent to work out miracles as stated, why can we not see them worked out in the ordinary events of every day life?" To this I make answer by saying, that there is such a thing known to us as "Sthhana Mahatyam", or that there is a difference in the electrical conditions of the places under consideration. Now I shall try to show how the difference arises. We all know, that it is possible to converge the Sun's rays bringing them to a focus or point by means of an optical lens, which focus or point when so concentrated gains so much in strength and intensity that it can set fire to any combustible material when directed towards them. But no such result could possibly be obtained from those very same rays in their scattered or diffused state. If we carry this analogy further and apply that in our present case, we shall find that this will hold good. Let us see how? My contention is to prove that there arises a difference of potential or tension between the electrical conditions of places such as those of confinement

where the very worst types of the human population find themselves incarcerated, within quite a narrow limit or boundary as against in the free open country, where people live more or less at ease and comfort according to their own free choice. Every one knows that a force gains in strength and intensity when it meets resistance and it seems plain that the human mind that is kept confined within a narrow limit, thwarted and over-ruled from many different directions in the free exercise of its own individual will, unable to find an outlet sufficient unto its needs, should fret and fume within its own material crust, raising its inner forces necessarily to a very high pitch or tension, converting itself into a highly charged electric battery so to say. And in a place where many such batteries get juxtaposed together, giving rise to quite a heterogeneous concourse of diversities, with very little or nothing at all in common between them, imagine what the condition is likely to be. My readers will please to note here that I am making use of the term electricity by which is meant animal electricity as opposed to the material, in order to signify the Omnipresent mind-stuff or

the sentient ether that I made mention of somewhere before. When the state of tension in this ethereal medium reaches beyond a particular pitch, there likely appear cracks and fissures in its membrane, like the sudden cracking of the Sphinx glass in Tennyson's *Lady of Shallot*, letting in the light of the Ultramundane, giving thereby the chance to the other-worldly to make good their appearance on our earthly plane. This is one way of looking at the question. But there seems another and perhaps a more general way that will serve to explain the problem before us from a more human standpoint. It may very generally be said of our jails and transportee settlements, and places like those, that they constitute the very embodiments of the collective misfortunes and misery of a whole people in a nut-shell. It is because of the fact that the Divine essence immanent in Nature appears most widely diffused and spread out in its vastness and immensity, incommensurate and incomprehensible, that we fail to comprehend its meaning, the meaning that poets and sages alone possess the eye for and make so much of in their wise utterances and hymnal

anthems. From this failure arises all the misery and little-mindedness, all self-conceit and self-deception, all heart-burnings and heart-lessness that we see around us. As an effect of this very littleness in us, the poor untutored child of nature, provoked suddenly to some uncontrollable heat of passion and temper, loses his reason and commits a misdeed only to repent for it life-long ever after. And when such a lot of miserable repentants find their way into jails or lunatic asylums, or the exile-islands, with nothing to hope for, nothing to seek, no ties of home, nor family, no affections nor friendship, save and except that one goal that is common to all, one friend that is every body's friend, one source of enjoyment that is every body's enjoyment especially of the downtrodden and neglected, the forlorn and the woe-begone, when such as those begin to seek, after their God, as the only resort where to allay the burning pain of their bruised hearts, just imagine with what eagerness they will run after Him and how earnest are their prayers. Who could withstand the melting effects of such piteous and touching appeals, and keep away from them? And

the Divine Love and Grace stands for the very receptacle of all love and grace,—could that shut itself out, closing doors against those most needy children of the Alma Mater, when they raised their cry Heaven-wards? Indeed not, Zephyr needs must blow and carry their tidings through Jove's window, melting Him with pity for his ever-so-dear lost lambs. He needs must stir Himself up and provide for the consolation and solace of His dear, woe-begone children on earth, those that He had created after His own image, His very flesh of flesh and bone of bones. For the poet and the sage He has given Himself out in poetry and music of His infinite creation, limitless and vast, but for the common unlettered hinds that clamour for something finite, for something that they could idolise and worship,—what about those? How would they be satisfied unless He appeared before them in visible, tangible form? It is, therefore, that in the very extreme of cases it becomes incumbent on the Divinity to appear on earth now and again even in visible flesh, however transient the stay! Just for their sakes.

The question will naturally occur, to us

now, when we ponder over the facts of the "lopping-off-of-head" case as stated by me regarding the possibility of any unseen power so to act on our physical constitution as literally to sever a particular member or members from a body, without the aid of any physical agent, such as some cutting tool or the like, and set back the said member or members in place, after a few seconds, making the body whole again. The question appears something like Shylock's taking a pound of flesh without shedding a drop of blood. To this I must say that the matter looks a very complicated one indeed, even after all that we have learnt regarding the supernatural so far. Here one might well remark that the very peculiar perception referred to above having been a visual one only and not conjointly verified by all the five senses together, could not be given the place of a phenomenal verity. When the eye deposed that the head was not on the trunk, if it were possible to feel that by our sense of touch, passing the hand over the headless trunk making sure that the head was not there, then of course there could have been no room for any the slightest doubt as to the truth of

our observation. But though I happened not to have done that, there seems to be scarcely any room for doubt left, considering the fact that I had experienced the thing myself on my own head once and known how it was felt by me. So that when I saw the very same thing happening in the case of my friend also, there remained no room for any further curiosity to verify the truth of the experience by making use of the touch sense as a final proof against all possible doubt. However, for arguments' sake one may still persist in thinking that the experience was something illusory and not real, as in the case of one under hypnosis, in which case, there might be such delusional perceptions as would astound the spectators by their startling deceptions. My readers know perhaps that to a subject under hypnosis if it were suggested by the operator, "Well Mr. so and so, when I give you the signal you will at once wake up, from your sleep and find everything around you just as you had seen before you went to sleep, with the single exception of Mr. such and such, whom you won't be able to see amongst your spectators", it is indeed a very curious phenomenon to notice that the said subject when he

wakes up at the signal from the operator appears not to see the said Mr. such and such, even though he were standing just in front of him. Though he appears to be in his normal sense in every other respect, talking to his friends and acquaintances just in his usual way, in respect to the said Mr. such and such, his perception seems quite nullified for the time, which fact could easily be ascertained by any bystander if he marks the subject's gaze, when it by chance falls in the direction of the person he was commanded not to see. It will be noticed that his eyes will assume quite a blank look, when they fall in that direction. Moreover it seems quite an astonishing fact that if a hat or some such thing be placed on the head of the said Mr. such and such now, the subject will appear to get quite bewildered as to how the thing should hang in the air without any visible support. He will even go near, to examine the thing in order to find out whether it is held suspended by means of some fixed wire or thread or some such thing, not visible from a distance. If any one should argue from the above, that my experience in the present instance, was something very much like a case

under hypnosis just mentioned, to him I would say that in the case of the hypnotised subject, what he experienced was not a general experience, collectively perceived by all present on the occasion. It is only an individual case in which, what the subject perceives is not even perceived by the operator himself and so might well be termed delusional. But in our case the perception was common to both the persons concerned. I shall here cite an instance from one of Professor Tyndall's own experiences as related by him in the Popular Science Library. Series, Vol. III. "Fragments of Science" Chap. VI. page 109, which I think bears on our question to a certain extent. Professor Tyndall says, to quote his own words "Some time ago I happened to stand in the presence of a large audience with a battery of fifteen Leyden Jars charged beside me. Through some awkwardness on my part, I touched a wire leading from the battery and the discharge went through my body. Life was absolutely blotted out, for a very sensible interval, without a trace of pain. In a second or so consciousness returned; I vaguely discerned the audience and apparatus, and by the help of

these external appearances immediately concluded that I had received the battery discharge. The intellectual consciousness was received with exceeding rapidity, but not so the optical consciousness.* To prevent the audience from being alarmed, I observed that it had been my desire to receive accidentally such a shock and that my wish had at length been fulfilled. But while making this remark, the appearance which my body presented to my eyes was that of a number of separate pieces. The arms for example were detached from the trunk and seemed suspended in the air. In fact, memory and the power of reasoning appeared to be complete long before the optic nerve was restored to healthy action''. Comparing his case with ours, though there is a good deal of difference in other respects, we find at least this one thing common between us, which means no small matter in defence of what we intend to prove; and that is, the possibility of a sensation, suggestive of the severance of a particular member or members of our body from the main trunk, due to an electric discharge. The only difference between our experience and that of Professor Tyndall's being in the fact that his

was a subjective impression without the objective reality, whereas in our case the experience proved to be both subjective as well as objective. In Professor Tyndall's case the effects of the battery discharge seemed to have set up such a disturbance in the material particles of his physical frame, and in his attempt at making those remarks to his audience, before the particles found time to settle back to their normal state of equilibrium, he made the mistake and there arose that perversion and perturbation so very startling to him. The effects of sound seem to have brought about the climax, as it will generally be found that under ordinary circumstances sound as are used in our conversations, being broken up into so many syllabic utterances, acts as a detonator and disrupter and not as a harmoniser, as in the case of the sounds of music that produce a single and continuous flow without the abrupt breakages that arise in the course of our ordinary talk. I have already said that the difference between his perception and ours lay in the fact that there was an objective reality manifest in our case, which seemed to be absent in his, or else the rest of the audience would have seen the

dismemberment of limbs in the professor, just the same as he himself had felt. From the study of the facts stated with regard to our case, it appears plain that the experience being not only subjective but objective also, there must have been some common grounds between myself and my friend so as to render it possible for the experience of one to concur with that of the other. It will be seen later on that this common ground may extend not only to one or two, but many more at a time. Now, if it could be possible for the supernatural to make good its appearance and disappearance in tangible material form, could we not imagine that, some such invisible agent taking advantage of the stronger party over the weaker in a contest may so materialise his forces as could act on the physical plane with such effect as would transform the material particles of a body into their ethereal constituent, the omnipresent animal ether in a trice, reverting to the material properties back again in the course of a return oscillation? For a dynamic power such as electricity, whose speed exceeds millions and millions of miles in the twinkling of an eye, I see no reason why it should appear impossible.

It makes us almost shrink in shame when we ponder over the myriads of invisible and unknown forces that are working in nature, of which man is but cognisant only of a very insignificant fraction and yet how conceited is he, even for the little he has attained.

“Oh Bharata (Aryuna), the beginning appears unknown and so also the end, the middle only seems known to us; why regret the loss?”

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारतः

अव्यक्त निधनान्येव तत्र का परिवेदना ॥

Bhagabad Gita.

How simple and child-like was the confession of Lord Kelvin the greatest Scientist of his day, when he said that with all his knowledge of the material sciences his was but a drop in the ocean. So far for theory, at present, now let us resume our story.

XI.

It was the day for the Mahomedan festival “Mohurram”; everywhere the noise of tom-

toms and the beat of drums were being heard. At about 3, or 4 o'clock in the evening, we seemed to hear the noise of a party of players coming from the direction of the Superintendent's bungalow. Thinking that they were approaching the criminal enclosure, we all gathered together at the gates. Just within a few minutes the sounds approached very near and a party of maskers arrived, painted all over their bodies in various fantastic coloured designs. We had not to wait for long and they entered by the big gate within our enclosure, dancing in various poses as they came; some five or six in all, amongst whom was to be also seen a little child, about four or five years old. The most prominent amongst the players was a youth who appeared painted as a "tiger" with black stripes, on a yellow ground, all over his body, wearing a pair of gloves, designed in imitation of the tiger's paw. Some four, or five amongst the maskers appeared to hold him from as many different directions chained by means of chains as many in number, attached to his neck-collar or ring. On inquiry I came to learn that this was their "Puli dance", the word "Puli" in Tamil meaning "tiger".

It was the practice amongst the local people of Madras to appear in all sorts of fantastically masked designs on the occasion of the Mohur-rum festival, fighting the mock fights with swords, daggers, lathies and so forth, for public entertainment. The very first in the performance came the little youngster I have mentioned before, dancing and posing, perfectly in time, to the beat of tom-toms, going round and round, as if he were already a grown-up man. I could not, however, help feeling a bit curious who this little jot of a fellow might be, who had learnt so well and at so young an age to keep time in his poses. I advanced a few steps forward and asked one of them whose son the youngster could be, thinking that he was very likely one of our Warder's sons, some of whom, I thought, appeared in the masquerade. The masker that I approached seemed not to hear me at first and said, "Can't hear you". When I asked him again, he answered "God"; and wanted me not to trouble him with any more questions. I could not, however, understand his meaning clearly, but one thing very peculiar I noticed when I went to inquire. It was that though I approached quite near the masker and

my voice was loud enough to be heard from an even greater distance, I could quite feel that he did not hear what I said, as my voice seemed to pass through without meeting with any resistance or response, just in the same way as light may be seen passing through transparent substances such as air and so forth without exciting any visual sensation, though its presence might be felt by the help of other senses. Those of my readers who have climbed hill-tops sufficiently high will have noticed that the atmosphere at that altitude appears so thin, that it becomes quite an insufficient medium for purposes of carrying sound even through comparatively short distances, so that if some one wanted to say something to a friend of his, standing at some distance from him, it would be found that he could not make himself heard very easily. My experience also appeared to be the very same with regard to my masker friend. The material constituents of his body seemed to have been derived from some such finer aggregation of matter as could not well respond to our gross physical impetus. Whatever the explanation, I ceased to ask him any more questions and turned my attention to the

play. It did not, and could not, even for once occur to me that my younger brother, of whom I have more than once made mention, could have been present in this party of masqueraders; but the one that they were holding chained, from so many directions, lo! it was that very vagabond brother of mine and none other!! What could be more strange than this? This was a surprise party indeed! and no wonder that he should have appeared in such fantastically coloured paints, as the principal masquerader in the party. Who could have recognized him from out of the rest of the maskers, under his present disguise, unless he himself had come forward to make known his identity to me? After having exchanged a few words in this way, his play began and so he had to turn to the dance and keep time in the usual way as the Mohurrum players do, going round and round, taking poses in keeping with the beat of drums and the sound of tom-toms, which was indeed most interesting to the observers. I really wondered at the ease and skill with which he managed to go through the show, as if he were quite an expert at his business, and it looked almost a miracle, when and how he had

managed to learn all that. As he was going on like that for some time, all on a sudden, they brought several can-fuls of water; the water that had been kept for the patients in big aluminium cans for drinking purposes durnig meal time. Suddenly feigning that my "tiger" brother had got excited beyond control, they began to pour all that water on him, just to cool him down to submission. Here, too, we could clearly see that this gross material water of ours could not very well serve the purpose of a cooling agent, in relation to those ethereal personages, and my supernal brother admitted that himself. Later on they requested the European Warder present there, to seat himself on a chair, so that they might make a display of their tactics before him. This European Warder proved to be one, who had served in the Lunatic Asylum for over twenty to twenty-five years and so was the most experienced of his class, and might well be regarded as the best judge regarding matters, however uncommon, that one might come across there. Knowing that the Muhurum party was approaching our enclosure, he had managed to send for a rupee coin from home and had kept that ready in his hand,

thinking that it might be necessary to give to the party some *bukshish* or gift-money by way of formality. When they asked him to sit on the chair, he said, "Oh, I see, you are after your *bukshish* now". The party, it seemed, was not prepared for the snub and felt quite abashed. They made their appearance, quite a jovial lot of maskers, simply to enjoy some fun on the physical plane, giving to us in return some entertainment also; but with no thought of making money out of their show, which would be something scandalous and would mar the effect of all that innocent mirth and pleasure. But as they had come to play the part of mortal man on earth, they had to go through the whole show like men indeed and to perfection, leaving no room for earthly man to doubt their earthly character. For that reason it became necessary for them to accept the *bukshish* also, as the *Muhurum* players do, or else there was the chance of their being found out, which they in all probability did not want. They had to agree at last to accept the offer, after a short consultation, and the burden of the task fell on my "brother", the angel who acted the principal part in the show. Our European Warder had

to sit on the chair as requested, the coin being placed at his feet. It was for my "brother" to come and pick that coin up from where it lay, in the course of his gymnastics, keeping time, as it was being given by the tom-toms and drums. This however my "brother" did, and did very well, taking several poses backwards and forwards, cutting all sorts of fantastic and ludicrous figures on his way, as he several times approached the coin, and then receded again, as a cat plays with a mouse, or the "tiger" with its prey. Finally, he approached the chair and stooping down on all fours, managed slowly and cautiously to reach the coin with his mouth and took it up between his teeth. Now that he had taken that shining little silver piece from the ground, it proved such a fun to us and discomfiture to him that we did not know whether to laugh or to pity him in his apparent difficulty. My readers perhaps know, how in our country monkeys are caught. Several mud pots are fixed on the ground with the space between the upper parts so narrow as only to allow a monkey's hand while empty to pass through, and when all those arrangements were complete, they would put some eatables, such as

banana, fried rice and so forth, and watch the results from a distance. The monkeys when they chanced to pass that way, finding such delicious fruits and things placed there for them to eat, would go near and thrust their hands immediately into those narrow-necked pots fixed to the ground, each clutching at a handful of those morsels. But our poor monkey did not know that this lavish display of dainties was only but a cunningly laid trap and not his dinner table. Our monkey knew only how to insert his hands into those pots, but not how to get them out; like Abhimanyu who knew how to enter the "Chakra byuhām" or the well-guarded military array of his enemy's camp, but not how to come out of it. The poor monkey would neither let go the handful of eatables that he had managed to lay hands on, nor would he get freed from his self-imposed "fix", screeching and howling all the while in the piteous and miserable plight of one who "does not know what to do". Such, indeed, seemed to be the condition of my "supernal brother" who had caught hold of the coin, a thing that was real earthly stuff with all the terrestrial properties of matter inherent in it, and no magic; what was

he to do with that? Moreover, it looked quite obvious from what we saw that the metal produced some very injurious reaction on the, apparently material but much finer atomic constitution of his physical frame. We could see plainly from the contortions of his face that he was suffering from some very pernicious action of the coin, while holding it in the palm of his hand. It seemed as if, his very entrails revolted against that uncanny touch and wanted to come out; but neither could he throw that undesirable article away, before the spectators, nor was it very easy for him to keep possession of the same. In one word, he seemed to be in a nice fix. It was he only of all the rest who appeared to get caught in the trap and it was inevitable that the others should go, leaving him alone to try and extricate himself from the meshes of his self-imposed snare. He gave to his men accordingly the signal to disperse, which they did, vanishing under cover of whatever objects they could manage to get behind, such as would screen them from view. He himself had to wait in our midst for some time longer. "What are you going to do now"? We asked; to us he replied, "What to do? As it fell on me to pick

up that coin, how could I avoid doing so? Now I must try to vanish, leaving the coin somewhere, in one of those 'European Warders' houses, from where it could easily be found out, so that it may not be altogether lost'. So saying, he prepared to move; we also wanted to follow just to see what he did, but he requested us not to do that, and we stopped, letting him go his own way. Now I think it will no longer be necessary to add, to this kind of supernatural phenomena, explanations calculated to elucidate their nature after all that has already been said on the subject. Moreover, I think it is time for me to change the subject of my narrative, as it is very likely to appear quite dull and monotonous to my readers if I were to continue in this strain for long, dealing only with a subject, so very astonishing and altogether beyond the pale of the ordinary experiences of our everyday life. It were no fault of our poor earthly-minded brain and imagination if they revolted against being taxed constantly with a subject that they scarcely get the chance of being acquainted with even for once in a lifetime; a type of occurrence that could not be said to take

place even once in a hundred thousand or a million instances.

So long I was working in the weaving shed, but gradually I seemed to get so very highly saturated with my work, that it appeared almost impossible for me to continue there any more. I felt as though a portion of my mind had already got converted into a loom; and whenever I tried to work, I saw, that the mind-loom would also begin to work, creating a disturbance altogether beyond my control. I, for instance, wanted to draw a particular part of the loom towards me, but before I could do so, the mind-loom had done that already, so that there remained little or no opportunity for me to do what I wanted. If, in spite of it all, I tried to exert myself, regardless of consequences, it became quite impossible for me to keep time regularly, as against the contradictory mind-stuff that acted just as a separate entity, working quite independently and fitfully, like a spoilt child that is beyond all possible submission and restraint. As a result, there arose

all sorts of complications, breaking of threads, snarls and tangles in the warp, flying of shuttles helter-skelter out of the loom; in one word, a total mess of the whole business.

Just about this time, while I was getting all this trouble in my work and did not know what to do to get rid of it, a new kind of work was introduced into our asylum. Formerly it used to be the practice there, to buy from the market the palm-leaf mats that the patients were given to use for their beds. It was now ordered that some amongst the working lunatics must themselves prepare the whole quantity required for use in the asylum, instead of having them bought ready-made. I, however, did not at first like the idea of leaving my work in the weaving shed and going in for mat-making, as I was not at all acquainted with the kind of work required of me there, and so preferred the one bird in hand to the two in the bush." Who wants to enter the unknown, if he can manage to keep himself within the limits of the known? But presently things began to take such a bad turn that I had no other course left but to think of some other occupation, letting my favourite work to take care of itself. Fortunately for

me, the Deputy Superintendent, seeing my distress in the loom, came to suggest to me one day, the work of mat-making. I at once accepted his proposal and agreed to learn that work. Generally speaking, in jails and similar places, when any new comer wanted to learn any new kind of work he would indeed find it very troublesome, if he were to come empty-handed. The man who taught the work would not let him learn easily, unless he paid him his usual tip. But he would experience no such trouble, if he had the good fortune to find some one in authority at his back. I too had to experience no such trouble, as it was the Deputy Superintendent himself who gave me the order, and the men taught me the first lessons in mat-making with proper care and attention without the least grudge or grumbling, because they did not get their tips. Very soon I picked up the art and began to weave two or three mats daily. This change gave me a sort of diversion after my final discomfiture at the hand-loom, and after all proved to me very interesting. After having learnt how to weave a coarse kind of mat that was wanted for asylum use, I seemed not to feel quite satisfied with what I did and

wanted to go deeper into the intricacies of the art, dealing in more complicated textures and fineries, such as would be used in the manufacture of fancy articles and other decent leaf-work. But, there being no provision made for teaching those things there, how was I to learn? Where was I to get my material and who is to teach? I began to turn this question in my mind for some time and it struck me that there remained a pretty good margin per leaf, every time they sliced away their required width of size, suitable for the quality of mats that had to be prepared for use in our asylum. This would do for my material, I thought, as it was all useless waste and no body cared for it. If I could manage to prepare thinner slices out of all those waste leaves, my first difficulty seemed solved, and as to the rest I could await developments. I found ample leisure even after finishing my usual daily task of making two or three mats; and, if during the spare time left at my disposal, I tried my own ingenuity and skill on the waste leaves, I thought I could learn all the tricks that I wanted to learn without depending upon any one to come and teach. But there was this difficulty again in the way which at first gave

me some trouble. They would not give me any knives not even a blunt one, for slicing the leaves, as they thought that I was a very, dangerous man, not fit to be trusted with any dangerous tools. What was I to do? How was I to slice my leaves, though leaves there were in plenty? But I must do that, at any cost, and learn the art, to be sure. I tapped my head again for a solution and very soon seemed to find a way out. There were plenty of broken glass-pieces, stuck to the wall-tops, all around; these would serve my purpose, I thought, and I gave to this ingenious device a trial as soon as possible. I picked up pieces of brick and stones from the ground and began hitting at those glass pieces, I chose out of the pieces that fell those which could be used as a substitute for knife, *i.e.* those having a very sharp cutting edge. With those for my implements, I began to try my game. Very soon I succeeded in slicing the leaves very fine, with the help of those very sharp-edged glass pieces and started weaving a finer kind of mat, only as a preliminary training and before attempting more complicated textures and fineries. After having finished my usual task for the day, I would

take up my new diversion so that within the leisure that I got, I managed to plaid about five or six inches of a finer quality of mat, adding to it another five or six inches next day, and so on, till at the end of a fortnight or so there came out a full-sized mat that I could dispose of in any way I liked it being so to say, my own private property, something that had practically come out of nothing. As soon as a mat was finished, there remained no end of applicants for the same and the Warders especially would tease me for one more and another, and so on. As the days went, something very curious and funny began to attract my notice. Whenever I would take up my plaiding work I would find that a bird came to sit on the branch of some neighbouring tree and I felt as though it watched me very minutely in my work. Such turned out to be the habit of this "bird teacher" of mine, that the moment I committed a mistake in the plaiding, that very moment it would start clamouring and screeching and would not stop till I had mended my mistake. As soon as the mistake was set right it seemed to feel quite satisfied and would cease to make any more noise. Of course it could not be said of a wild

bird, twittering about on the branches of trees, that it actually had come to teach me the art of leaf plaining in full consciousness like a human being. It seemed to get possessed by some unseen intelligence, in the same way as we find people possessed sometimes of the demon, that makes use of the person possessed, as an instrument, totally subservient to its own will or fancy. This fact I could easily detect from the direction of the bird's gaze, while it made the noise. I noticed quite clearly that its eyes were neither pointed towards me nor towards my work, and yet every time it chanced to raise its cry just at the right moment. From this I inferred that it was not the bird that watched my work, but something else, some unseen intelligence that made use of the bird's physical shape, just in the same way as we make use of a musical instrument.

My mental condition had also undergone such changes the time, that I felt as though I was surrounded on all sides by an all-absorbing intelligence, plainly manifest in every thing that chanced to attract my notice—birds, beasts, insects and all the animal world, even trees, plants, and the vegetable world not excepted.

The moment I chanced to open my eyes, I seemed to find myself encompassed without fail by this omnipresent sentience. My readers will please to note here that this is not a mere platitude or a flight of poetic imagination; though I am afraid I am not very likely to be fully understood by such of my readers as have had no similar experiences. This external sentience was practically nothing other than my own echo, a sort of deification of my own intelligence, reflected in external nature as in a mirror. Whenever any particular thought or idea occurred to me, I seemed to find a corresponding response, re-echoed and reverberated in external nature, from amongst whatever my eyes chanced to look upon; from the birds, the beasts, the trees and all, in legible, illegible, audible, inaudible, even in clear human tongue at times, quite to my astonishment and surprise what could be the meaning of all that. I am rather of opinion that the word "echo", which I have here made use of, does not carry the exact sense, that I intend to impress upon my readers. In our physical world, the word "echo" signifies simply a rebound or return of a sound just as it is produced without effecting

any appreciable change, i.e., the same sound reverts to the one that makes it exactly in the same way. But the "echo" that I am talking of does not mean anything of that sort; this is not what we may call an insentient echo, but something quite sentient and intelligent and it did not, like the physical echo, return by way of response, the exact thought or idea as it occurred in my mind, making a mere repetition of it. In the physical echo, sound alone repeats itself in sound, as opposed to sense, and so we call that inert. But still it would be better to note here that this response, though sentient and intelligent, did not generally exceed the limits of my own scope of knowledge and information, so that it did not in ninety-nine per cent of the instances introduce anything altogether beyond my pale of knowledge or brought in something that might have been called entirely new to me. From this I am inclined to infer that this external intelligence, as I have once said before, could not have been anything other than a mere deification of my own intelligence, one-half working from within and the other from without. Of course, it could not be fairly denied that on very rare

occasions things did make ~~their~~ appearance from regions quite beyond my pale of limited knowledge, as if by a lightning flash. But, generally speaking and for all practical purposes, it would, I think, be quite sufficient to call that external intelligence my own dual existence reflected from outside. Moreover I would not willingly give myself away to anything that superseded my own intelligence, leaving gaps in the causal connection of things within my view, so as to render me quite helpless in the hands of some unknown agency. I would always prefer to move about with my own senses wide awake rather than lean upon some one else. In spite of all this, if by chance the unforeseen should of itself make its appearance before us and attract our notice, however unasked and uncalled-for, it must not go unexplained; we must try to analyse and synthesise its pros and cons, even re-adjusting ourselves, if need be, to an altered state of things, giving a fuller and more complete explanation and solving our problems more satisfactorily instead of ignoring the whole thing in our indolence and indifference, as something quite meaningless.

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One ~~more~~ point, I think, is necessary to state here; and that is the "form mediums" for those external responses. In our Hindoo philosophy all modes of expression are resolved into two very simple generalisations that explain their manifestation, namely "Nâma" and "Rupa", *i.e.* name and form. For every idea, they say, there must be a "Name", *i.e.* its verbal concomitant, as well as a "Rupa", *i.e.* its concomitant in form, before it could make itself felt and understood. Now the question may arise whether the external responses I have referred to, accepting them as the dual reflection of my own self, made themselves manifest through my own or another form. If it was another, then the question will naturally arise,—How should the response that is not making itself felt through my own form be called a reflection of my own self in external nature? The question indeed appears very puzzling. I shall, however, try to explain matters as best as I can. Though I must admit that the forms that appeared to reflect or respond to the thoughts that arose in my mind were not as a rule the very prototypes of my own form, yet we have but little or no reason to doubt the propriety

of my assertion that they were \ reflection of my own self. If we analysed the sum total of contents that find a place in our minds, we should see that it consisted mostly of impressions, received from objects outside ourselves, of persons and things that we come across in the usual course of events and of the thoughts thus arising. The individual seems to occupy only a very small, though vital, place in the midst of all the thousand and one things that go to make up the total. Who can afford to sit before a mirror all his life and see his own picture, in order to avoid seeing the variety and multiplicity that surrounds him on all sides? Yet we must not forget that all this variety of external objects ceases to be external in relation to the mind, the moment it is cognised and received within through our sense organs. They become part of ourselves, just in the same way as food taken from outside when digested and assimilated, no more remains something external but becomes a very part and parcel of our physical constitution getting converted into our own flesh and blood. Now, if it should so happen that this variety of external objects, converted into mental images within the

inner consciousness, should find themselves projected once again on the external world as a live sentient membrum, covering all objects and things that attracted our notice, have we the right to call that sentience anything other than our own? Of course, not. But, then, if we chanced to find in that sentience reflections from some ulterior source, such as could not have been the outcome of our own individual experiences, past or present, we must admit that there has been outside intervention or interception: we may safely posit some other individual or individuals colliding or cooperating with us in omnipresent and omniscient aspects. But till then there seems no reason why we should take the external reflections for anything other than ourselves, even though the responses seem to make themselves felt through the medium of forms previously known to us but not our own. Time, the Divider of all is, as we know, constantly and incessantly cutting into our consciousness from all sides and at all angles, so as to transform the homogeneity and uniformity of its nature into a heterogeneous medley of diversities; as a result of which we experience this infinite variety and multiplicity, immanent

in Nature in beauteous design and grotesque presentation.

Though the preliminary stage in learning finer leaf-work was devoted mostly to a special kind of matplaiding, I very soon began to try my hand at other kinds of fineries also. Of course, what I attempted at first practically came to no body's use for it was the result of a very clumsy manipulation of things on my part, untaught and unaided as I had to work. One could, at the very start, hardly expect any better results from a novice like myself. I, however, found this new occupation a great source of diversion and pleasure, so that even if I did not succeed in my first attempts, I persisted on instead of losing heart and giving up, till I somehow managed to get the thing ready just as I wanted. In this way from the very simple and ordinary straight plaiding that was taught there, I learnt all the different tricks that were required in making different fancy articles, such as, fans, caps, bags, etc., even slippers not excepted. As the new Superintendent deprived me of the pair of shoes that I was allowed to wear by his predecessor in office, I had to go about bare-footed and as I had not done so

for long and began to feel a sort of chill getting into my system, giving me a very peculiar sensation in the feet and jarring on my nerves. I must somehow prepare a pair of slippers, I thought, and I stirred out of doors, in search of some materials out of which I might do so. As I was searching for something suited to my purpose, I found that there lay a piece of dry woody centre-stalk of the cocoanut leaf; I chose at once to make a pair of wooden slippers out of that. Accordingly I broke two small pieces each the size of my feet, from out of the lower and broader portions of that big long thing, and made them into a pair, for my use. I tried this most ingenious device of mine, for some time and went about slip-shod like a lord amongst my fellow inmates making myself the laughing stock of all. Very soon, however, I came to realise that my present design was not a success, and that my "slippers" could not be worn with any very great amount of ease and comfort. Thus thinking, I began to try my skill in the craft that I had so long practised, and after a few trials managed to give shape to what might fairly be called a pair of slippers. As the days passed I managed to prepare a very

decent pair for my use, so much, so that one of our European warders took a fancy to them and wanted me to make a pair for him. Of course, it was quite a pleasure to me to find that the thing that I took so much time and trouble for, had at last found a patron and had not been sheer waste of energy in a fruitless quest; so I quite willingly made a pair for him too. I also remember in this connection a Bengali couplet that I managed to complete, being elated at this most signal success of mine in the leaf-plaiding art. I used to sing that couplet set to one of our indigenous Baulia tunes, keeping time with it whenever I happened to be engaged in mat-plaiding, deriving from it much pleasure and amusement in my work.

Now it is time, I think, after all this lengthy discourse relating to my own personal history, to change the topic for the benefit of my readers in order to break the monotony and tediousness of their having to attend only to a single individual's story, dealt with at such great length. It will, I think, prove a pleasant change for my readers, if I relate some of my experiences regarding the other inmates of the Asylum with

whom I had ~~1~~ come in contact for nearly 6 or 7 years while in Madras.

XIII.

There were not very many lunatics there who could be called stark mad and altogether dangerous, but there were no doubt some of that type, of whom by and by. Generally speaking, they were quite a harmless lot, gone off their heads a bit probably owing to some family troubles of their own. As a rule, they were found, moving about quite freely, within the Asylum premises, some working, others sitting and talking amongst themselves, giving no trouble whatsoever to any one. Some, again, were of a very peculiar type, living so to say in an imaginary world of their own, talking in their own way, to what imaginary persons, no one knows, laughing, singing, shouting, dancing, weeping, all to themselves, but at no time showing violent fits of temper.

There was a European lunatic I saw there who was of a very peculiar nature. He was in the Lunatic Asylum, they said, for the last

forty or fifty years and died some time before I obtained my release. He was kept in the same room ever since he came to the Asylum. For myself I never once saw him change his room or even stir out of doors during all the five or six years of my stay there. Moreover, even the most casual observer, if he chanced to pass by his door, would notice a very peculiar thing. Every five or ten minutes it was his habit to bawl out in grating tones and a peculiar manner, "Asia, Europe, Africa, America, Khara Rao" following it up with something unintelligible and markedly guttural. Could one explain to us the significance and import of the gentleman's peculiar mania? To me it seems that he posed as the Lord of the Universe and commanded the nations of the earth to stand at attention and obey his inquisitorial call, like Jesus commanding the sea to be calm or Sri Rama Chandra aiming his deadly arrow at the waters of the deep bringing it to its knees before Him, the "Lord and Master of all". Such men seem to belong to our earth, held to it only by a very slender chain, i.e. the one of food and shelter; for the rest of their concerns, they seem to belong to some unknown world of their

own. From ~~their~~ mode of life it appears to me that just as our sadhus and ascetics, when the spirit of renunciation awakes in them, leave home and family and all, taking to the wilderness, to mountain caves and fastnesses, far, far away from human habitation, in order to perform their devotional practices ; so also the Europeans, when they happen to get taken in by that self-same spirit, find themselves in the Lunatic Asylum for want of a better and a more suitable place to serve them in their need. I have come across other European civil patients of this type who have lived in the Lunatic Asylum for many, many years, only for the dust of their earthly moulds to return to dust there at the end. I seem to see no other feasible explanation for this long-contained stay of theirs, in such a place for no possible insanity of theirs,, as far as I could judge from appearances.

There is at least this one particular feature noticeable in these self-imposed internments, and that is the development of our powers of observing the very subtle changes that are constantly being worked out in and about us by one of the prime factors and prime movers of this phenomenal world, viz. Time. Under

ordinary circumstances, our variously preoccupied mind, constantly running after a thousand distractions, could not by any means fix its attention coolly on genuine and unalloyed Truth. We are all being driven constantly hither and thither in search of means calculated to promote the gratification of our petty individual desires; where and when can we find the opportunity to devote our energies to marking the very subtle changes that are being incessantly effected by that ever-moving factor and entity, as it is incessantly working its way through space, leaving its indents, decipherable only by those who possess the eye for them?

There was a local Madrasi patient whom I came across there. He was an educated gentleman in the ordinary way, who had a very peculiar habit. In his ordinary dealings with people he appeared quite a sensible man, with not even a single sign of insanity traceable in him; but when after the day's freedom of movement and ease he would be locked up in his cell in the evening, he seemed to turn into a different man altogether repeating every two or three minutes a set formula or motto of his in English of a very peculiar nature, apparently worded

and composed ~~by~~ himself. He would pronounce the dictum at the very top of his voice, roaring out those lines in a thundering tone, making a display of his rhetorical accomplishments like the very best and finished of orators. I remember those words, every letter of them, and quote them here. They are as follows.

"I wish at the time of Death, I be born, and take revenge in that simple way".

It seems quite possible that as a result of some family troubles of his, some one might have done him some very serious wrong which deranged his brain to some extent and caused him to repeat this most pious wish of his for a noble revenge on his enemy. But the manner in which he thundered out his formula up to the word "revenge", sounded something revengeful indeed! If one were to hear him pronounce the first portion only, roaring like a lion as he did, one would indeed take him for a violent and blood-thirsty fiend, whose spirit of revenge was awakened to such a pitch, that, if he were to meet his adversary the moment he was uttering those ominous words, he would dash at him in the twinkling of an eye, throw him flat on the ground and, like Bhima sitting

on the chest of Duhshasana, would tear him to pieces and drink his blood. But the very next moment when he pronounced the concluding portion of his motto "in that simple way" in a very soft and low tone, the entire meaning of his words changed to the exact opposite of what appeared to be his meaning at first, like the "Ashaththhama hata, iti Gaga" story of the Mahabharata.

I shall make mention of one or two other lunatics, whom I consider worth mentioning in this connection, and leaving the topic pass on to something else:—I noticed a very peculiar characteristic amongst the illiterate and uneducated lunatics whom I came across there, inasmuch as they appeared to work and talk quite like sensible men in many respects, but with this difference that they seemed to be always fighting in their own minds some unknown enemy of theirs, threatening and abusing him in the very foulest and the most vulgar language that it was possible for them to make use of, satisfying themselves in this most peculiar way, for want of any better, in return for the injuries done to them by their

unknown enemy or the god of mischief perhaps, whom they could not otherwise take to task.

There was a criminal patient who used to move about and work with us and who seemed quite a sober and sensible man in every way, so that he was given the convict-warder's badge, in consideration of his work and trustworthy habits. But such was the irony of fate, that this very man whom no one could ever have suspected of any violent inclinations, so lost his head one night, that he shook the whole asylum so to say, with his wild deeds. I was in hospital at that time on account of some slight illness and my friend, the above-mentioned patient, whose name was Tambi Paiyan, also came there for some reason or other and occupied the room next to mine. As we were both in hospital for some time together, it so happened that at about mid-night, while we were asleep in our respective rooms, we suddenly heard a grating noise coming from the top of the tiled roofing of our Block, as if some one was breaking it. Soon the noise increased so much that I had to leave my bed in order to ascertain what the matter was. I came and stood before the front door of my

cell; what I saw from there was very ominous. The whole hospital was in a wild state of confusion and disorder; warders, nurses and all, were almost in hysterics, running hither and thither in their embarrassment, frightened out of their wits, and not knowing what to do. Tambi Paiyan had managed to climb up the back-wall of his room, finding a stay for his hands in the small window on that wall. Of course the window was much higher up than what one could reach with one's hands even if one stood on tiptoe. Reaching the tiles in this way, he had broken one with his fist, and made good his exit through the hole. None the less it was not a very easy job to climb up that wall as he did and break through roof-tiles an inch thick with one's fist. He seemed to be possessed at the time by some diabolical agent; else it would not have been possible for him even in his cooler moment to have performed the feats he did perform in an excited frame of mind. He was scattering about and around him whatever he could lay his hand on bricks, mortars, tiles etc. Soon he reached the roof of my room and began flinging things from there. I found myself in a very precarious condition

and managed somehow to hide in a corner, the lumps of brick and mortar began to pour in like hail-stones from above. Just at this juncture, as matters took more and more serious turn, one of our European Warders came to my rescue, opening the door of my cell and letting me out. Something very striking about him attracted my notice at that time. His name was G. A. Brady, and I should like to say a few words in this connection, before I proceed any further with Tambi Paiyan's story. Many of my readers perhaps know that the human brain is supposed to emit a peculiar kind of light, known to scientists as the "N" Rays, a sort of phosphorescent radiation resulting from the thought currents that agitate the brain cells. There is also a peculiar kind of radiance or halo that many of us might have noticed in connection with the holy personages or saints, if we had the chance to meet any in our lives. But all those could in no way compare with what I saw at that time. When Mr. Brady came to open the door of my room, such was the peculiar effulgence that radiated from all over his person, that he appeared almost like a second light by the side of the one that he held

in his hand. In Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* I remember having read a description of a saintly person, the sister of the Bishop of D', where the author with the help of a few ingenious and masterly touches of his unique pen pictures her as a figure, rendered almost transparent by virtue of her saintliness, with as little flesh as sufficed for the spirit to reside in. Mr. Brady was on this occasion almost as transparent. What Victor Hugo only pictured in his imagination was in him realised in actual flesh. This was the only occasion on which the light that radiated from his person appeared so bright and luminous. Though at times (when he was on night duty) I had noticed a sort of luminous effulgence coming out of his person, it never reached such brilliancy as was noticed on this occasion. He appeared to be keeping an almost material incandescent lamp, burning within his person and the fleshy outer cover of his physical frame seemed to have been rendered so transparent by the rays of that inner light, that it literally made him a luminous body, lighted from outside by the lamp he was holding in his hand, and from inside by the one that he kept burning within. By the time Mr. Brady

had managed to get me out of danger from the pelting that was going on from the roof of our block, the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent and all the asylum staff arrived. Tambi Paiyan, whom people used to call Chimnua Tambi (the word "Tambi" means younger brother in Tamil), was traversing the length of the roof in his fit excitement, hurling tiles and things from there with such a tremendous force and in such an incessant and heavy shower with his hands and feet, that it looked like sure death to those who might venture to come within the range of his missiles. Who could dare approach him, much less stop him in his mad hurly burly? How many times did the Superintendent call aloud for him in a sweet and endearing tone, giving him every assurance that no one would trouble him if he came down of his own accord; but all to no purpose. He continued in his mad frenzy hurling missiles all the while and laid one side of the roof totally bare, giving it the appearance of a half-shaven head. When he had finished throwing nearly all the tiles on one-half of the roof, that he could reach with his hands and feet, he suddenly had a very strange and peculiar fancy. There was

a big banian tree that branched out at some distance from the roof of our block nearby. The very moment the idea occurred to him, he made a grab at one of those branches, jumping from the roof, almost in a miraculous way, such as would astonish even most finished and highly-trained acrobat. Once he had managed so to cling to one of the branches of that banian tree, a very peculiar and funny idea occurred to him and he at once took off the clothes he was wearing and tied them to a branch, as if to show that in his exultation he had unfurled the flag of triumph on that tree, as an indication of his victory and signal achievements. This done, he took a second leap, equally miraculous, and came back to the roof again. This grand feat of his appears to us almost like a repetition of what Hanuman did in the "Treta Yuga", while setting fire to the "Golden Lanká Puri" of Ravana, for the latter's nefarious doings. For a man in his normal state of mind and body to have taken a leap, so big and from such a height, in which a mere slip would mean sure death, appears to us as something next to impossible and we can not really imagine how he managed to do all that or what power gave him the

strength and determination to accomplish such a miraculous feat, all on a sudden. In the meantime the authorities brought and placed a bamboo ladder against the roof of the shed, and some of the warders were contemplating a very daring enterprise. They thought that they could get to the roof by means of that ladder, so that they might catch hold of the man, by chasing him from several directions all at once. But when they reached the foot of the ladder and began to climb, Tambi Paiyan appeared, tile in hand, like "Yama" himself or "Terror" incarnate and gave them such a chase that all had to come down and run for the sake of their dear lives. Soon our giant lunatic seemed to be overtaken by fatigue and exhaustion after all this superhuman exertion for so long and to have lost all consciousness. He rolled down from the roof in an inert heap, scarcely breathing as he lay. The injuries that he received from that fall were very painful even to look at; both his arms were fractured, a long and deep gash lay across his face and nose, and his whole body was weltering in a pool of blood. They somehow managed to carry him to one of the special class rooms there, and after having washed and cleaned the

bruises properly, stitched and dressed those gaping wounds with antiseptic dressing, and bandaged the fractured arms carefully with wooden splints. Shortly after he recovered his senses, he seemed to get back the usual composure that was his, and showed no further signs of insanity talking to us just as he did before. Within a month or so, through tender nursing and careful treatment in hospital, his wounds were all healed up, but the arms, though re-set, were not quite in order and could not be made use of by him in any useful work; so that he found himself practically disabled for life. As time went on, he began to feel so very dejected that, unable to bear the dead weight of an altogether unemployed and inactive life, he seemed to prefer death to what appeared to him altogether a burdensome dependence on others, so much so, that he could not even take his meals with his own hands and had to be fed. In this melancholy mood he managed to strangle himself one night in his cell and committed suicide in order to escape his troubles.

XIV.

It was about this time that there came to our asylum a giant Superintendent, Major Leet Palk by name, full six feet high, if not more, a man-mountain in the literal sense of the term. The Superintendent whom he replaced was also a very tall man but not so fat. The very first day that he came to asylum, Major Palk seemed to take a fancy to me, I do not know why. He came to my cell the very evening he came, just after we had all been locked up for the night. There was the European warder, Mr. Brady, with him, and the compliment that I received from this new comer, on our first meeting, turned out to be very short and sweet, "Ah, you monkey," all to my astonishment and surprise. I was at the time occupying one of the rooms set apart for the European criminal patients, according to directions received from our previous Superintendent. "What is this!" I thought; "the gentleman comes to see me ever for the first time in his life, and yet how queer that he should not hesitate in the least before he chose to accost me in this altogether unexpected fashion as if we had all

along been known to each other, and had been on terms of jocose familiarity." I did not quite seem to relish this very blunt way of cutting jokes with a new acquaintance, and rejoined in an equally rude tone. I took objection to his uncalled for familiarity and said "You seem to be no better than what I am." This very timely and befitting retort of mine proved too caustic so that the Major began to threaten me, saying "Oh, you are a bit independent. All right, I shall see what I can do for you." No sooner did he say this, than it struck him, that I was staying in the European ward. This seemed to give him a very easy advantage over me and he was not prepared to loose his chance. "Who brought you to the European Ward? Are you a European?" he asked; and to this I answered that I was an Indian and not a European and that the late Supdt. had arranged for my stay there. Next arose the question of my dress. I was wearing private clothes at the time, as allowed by our previous Supdt. instead of what patients in the Lunatic asylum generally wore. This seemed to attract his notice and he said, "You are wearing your home-clothing, I see; is this your home? You are a criminal and you must

wear your criminal clothes, all the time that you remain here." So saying our "Furious" the second, ordered my removal to the native ward, directing his men to change my private clothes and give me criminal clothes instead. As they brought that queer-looking uniform for me I seemed to feel a bit piqued at the thought of a change so sudden and unwonted. I planned how I might avoid this very apparent difficulty in being made to face such a public demonstration of my humiliation and shame, after having enjoyed many privileges. Suddenly an idea caught my fancy and I took out the blanket that they gave me to use in bed and wrapping it round my person, took off my clothes, saying "A fig for your clothes, you can take away all; both mine as well as yours, if you please", and sat squatting on the floor of our Veranda, like a "Sadhu Babaji" in perfect unconcern, regardless of all consequences. But all the warders began to persuade me to wear the clothes that they had brought, saying that this Supdt. though somewhat blunt and rude in his manners, was not a bad man at heart and bore no ill-will against any one for very long. They said that he would soon forget all that I had said, and

treat me well, if only I would do what he wanted of me for once or twice; moreover when the Supdt. had ordered my removal to the native ward, even the blanket I was wearing, will have to be taken away, so that there would be nothing left for me to wear, as there were no blankets to be had in the native ward, where the inmates were allowed only a gunny a-piece to cover themselves with at night, in place of a blanket. Finding no way out at last, I had to wear whatever clothes they gave me and come over to the native ward. Amongst the lunatics there were many who did not care a two-pence for all the clothes of this world, that people make so much of, and who went about stark naked proving to the world the significance of the very wise saying "Naked we came from our mothers' womb, and naked shall we go." They alone seemed to have realised the meaning of Thomas Carlyle's philosophy of clothes, who in his *Sartor Resartus* most graphically defines man as but a "featherless biped" or "a straddling forked-radish with a head fantastically carved." I too might have followed in their wake and proved to the Supdt. the very apparent and undeniable fact of Carlyle's assertion to his satisfaction, had

I but chosen to do so. But fortunately or unfortunately for me I had not been promoted to their class and so, preferred my humiliation to such a clever demonstration of my powers, even though it were calculated to prove to the Supdt. the truth of an observation made by one of England's most noted and admired sages. It followed as a matter of consequence that the jack-daw had to get shorn of all his peacock feathers, making his appearance once more, as the same old jack-daw he was, amongst the fellow jack-daws of his own species, and I had to come over to the native ward, making myself one amongst the fellow-natives of my country, bidding good-bye to all my European paraphernalia, as far as the Lunatic Asylum went, getting in return for all that I had left, a solitary mat prepared out of palm leaves by the patients themselves, the very coarsest kind that it was possible to prepare perhaps, and a most princely gunny cloth for a blanket, that a real king might have envied, had he but come in person to see this very extreme limit of my luxury and comfort as his Majesty's honoured though compulsory guest. There was even what might be called a pillow, made out of straw, stuffed tight into

a cloth case, so as to render it sound as brick and as hard as ever. These were the three very simple articles that had to serve for all the equipment and furniture that could be said to adorn the nakedness of a bare three square-yard hole or dungeon, that appropriated to itself the very high-class and dignified designation of a 'room.' All these indignities, though intended originally for my discomfiture, served only to add to my strength of mind, instead of leaving me disconcerted and dispirited. Gradually the Supdt. also seemed to change in his attitude towards me and treated me more or less as usual, even fairly well, I may say.

* I should here like to mention a very peculiar phenomenon that came to my notice while I was staying in the European ward, some time before my final transfer from there. I was sitting in my room one night, as usual, after lock-up; there was a lamp burning before my cell, bright enough to light my room even for reading purposes. It was about eight o'clock and we had not yet gone to bed, when there occurred an incident so very curious and unforeseen, that I found myself quite bewildered how it was that such a thing should have

happened, contrary to all our previous notions regarding the existing laws of nature. We have read, many of us, in Milton's *Paradise Lost* his description of chaos, where "darkness overwhelmed darkness, and in such ever-deepening shades, as to render it preceptible almost to the human touch-sense, which the poet figuratively calls "palpable obscure".

As I was sitting quietly for some time in my room, there appeared all to my astonishment and surprise, patches of darkness on the clean white-washed walls, skipping and dancing a devil's dance before my eyes, as if the light that burned before my room, was not at all sufficient to illumine their dark properties. What Milton only conceived in his imagination, seemed to take effect before my very eyes. I am of opinion from what I had experienced in the above case, that if our present-day scientists cared to undertake investigations relative to such phenomena, let them rest assured, that they shall not go without a reward for their labours. They shall indeed and without doubt find ample food for thought, provided they undertake their investigations in the proper spirit. I feel quite confident that they

shall come face to face with facts altogether new to them, with the result that they may find it necessary even to readjust their theories, in many cases, in order to suit their newly-acquired experiences. We all understand "darkness" only as the absence of light and nothing more; a body appears black only because it absorbs all the light that may fall on it, without giving anything out in return; we do not take it for a positive entity in any of our calculations, so far as I know. That this darkness should manifest itself in the form of a positive force or energy, making itself felt as so many visual impressions, superseding all the effects of light that might go to illumine a room, is a fact, that will, I think, astound even the very keenest and the best of scientists and philosophers, not to speak of ordinary intellects and small fry, who have not gone very deep into the mysteries of modern science. If we admit the proposition "every action has its equal and contrary reaction" as true, it seems very reasonable that in the same way as light makes itself felt in the form of visual impressions only when it meets with resistance, getting reflected or refracted thereby in external

nature, so also will happen to be the case with "darkness" when so resisted. I am inclined to assume that there must be substances that can radiate "darkness" in the same way as there are those that can radiate light, and also substances that are transparent to those radiations as well as others that are opaque to them. I remember having come across a very peculiar word in a Tamil dictionary published by the Government of Madras, that seems to me very suggestive in this connection and the word referred to is "iruladityam", which means the "dark Sun". Our present-day scientists also admit that there are many such "Suns" moving about in space, and if they are supposed to emit dark or the ultra rays, I think my proposition is established. Of course every one knows nowadays that our visual sense cannot receive light impressions, beyond a certain limit or range above and below, i.e. its scope lies only somewhere between the ultra-red on the one hand and the ultra-violet on the other. We may very well assume that either by virtue of some artificial stimuli that raised our capacity to perceive or indirectly due to some form of resistance in nature by those ultra rays, there

may take place a sort of visual sensation that we do not ordinarily come across. Not only this; I am prepared to infer from the above experience that this external world of ours may be made perceptible to our visual sense much the same as it exists, by the reflections or refractions of darkness or dark rays in the same way as it is done by light, according to our present-day notions regarding the cause of visual sense-perceptions. Those dark rays may very reasonably appear to visualise external nature, in case there be a necessary subjective adaptation of the visual sense on the one hand, or the objective change of medium or resistance on the other. It appears possible even for the blind to see, provided our scientists exerted themselves in that direction, proving to the world thereby, a thing that is only figuratively ascribed possible to God-head by poets and devotees but never rendered into practice as far as human knowledge went. I can really imagine in my mind a dark-ray lamp that will radiate such energy as would make up for the deficiencies in the visual organ of the blind, so as to represent the colour impressions in his brain, as could reproduce things as discerned

by the normal eye. In that case we should see things with our eyes closed, when such a lamp were made to burn. What light can make visible when the eyes are open, "darkness" will do so when closed.

Now to begin with the next incident in the course of our narrative. There occurred an incident that took the whole asylum by surprise one afternoon, while Major Leet Palk happened to be the supdt. in charge of our asylum. Some time ago there had come to our asylum a man by name Elyia Goundon sent there for treatment from some other jail. When he came there, at first he seemed to show no very apparent signs of insanity or violence, but only appeared to be labouring under a very peculiar delusion. My readers perhaps remember how it happened that I had been under the delusion that I was being sent home while coming away from the Andamans. The very same thing seemed to happen to this Elyia Goundon while he was being transferred to the lunatic asylum; and when he came to our asylum for the first time, he appeared ever so eager to go home, that he would ask any one and every one when he was to be sent away and so on,

till finding no one to care for what he asked, he would himself go to the guard-room near the big gate of our enclosure, thinking that it was a railway ticket-office where he might get his railway ticket. The men in the guard-room would drive him away saying that he was not to get his ticket from there and he would come back disappointed for a time, but not quite satisfied with the reason why they refused him his ticket when he considered himself entitled to one. He would repeat this game of appearing before his so called ticket-office asking them again and again to give him his ticket in order that he might go home, only to get driven back from there once more and so on every time. Finally he seemed to realise his difficulty in getting a ticket from such an unsympathetic lot of officials and gave up the attempt, as he had found that it was all to no purpose, however much he might beg of them for a ticket. As time went on, people ceased to take any notice of him and he was allowed to move about as we did and no very particular steps were taken to guard his movements in any way, as they thought that he was only a harmless lunatic from whom there could be nothing much to

fear. One afternoon, however, contrary to all our previous notions regarding him, he appeared suddenly to turn quite a different man from what he used to be and his excitement seemed so complete and led him to such a height of wrecklessness, that the whole asylum appeared to be shaking in its shoes before this mad desperado of a lunatic, run amock beyond all possible control till he had finished his job and wrecked his vengeance on some poor lunatics, harmless in the extreme and against whom there could have been no possible grounds for his bearing any grudge or spite. All this, he did for no apparent reasons but that he was being kept confined instead of being released as he thought was his right. What he did was something fearful indeed and struck terror into the hearts of all, present for a time, with not even a single exception. There was a small black-smith shed, within the criminal enclosure compound, where some of the criminals worked and where lay scattered many iron pieces by the side of that smithy, that people took no notice of. It was there that our mad man went first, in search of some implement suitable to his needs. As soon as he had found one, a big bar of iron it was,

he took it up and rushed out in reckless excitement, literally smashing the heads of those that by chance happened to be on his way, with a single blow apiece, that fell like Thors' hammer from no one knew where. It all took place within such a short time, that before the men, who fell victims to the vengeance of this "mad man," found time to be on their guard, it was all over with them. After he had felled flat three men like that, most fatally wounding them one after another with his sledge-hammer-rod, the inmates raised a hue and cry; and we all looked that way. Fortunately for me I happened to have been at a distance else there was no knowing what might have turned out to be my fate that day. Hearing all the noise, some strong and stalwart fellows with bamboo poles sufficiently long and stout ventured to approach the miscreant catching him after having given him a short chase. Of course the man got a very severe belabouring no doubt after he had got caught, but what was all this beating to a man that had lost all sense of right and wrong and did not know what was what? When I had reached the spot hearing all the noise, they had caught Ely a Gaundon already; and the

scene enacted there, appeared something fearful indeed and quite beyond comprehension; something that would frighten even the very bravest, and the very stoutest of hearts, not to speak of weaker minds. Each of the three places where those wounded men lay unconscious with their skulls fractured and their brains coming out, weltering in pools of blood, looked like so many horrible red-letter scenes, that though I happened not to get a chance to witness the war-front in the late European War, in spite of my willingness to go there, —I doubt whether it is possible to witness even there a more horrible sight than the one that came to our notice. Two men out of the three breathed their last within a very short time and the supdt. only selected the third out of all the three, who looked rather healthy and had a somewhat stout constitution, and ordered the men to carry him to hospital for treatment. They accordingly brought a stretcher and carefully placing the third man on it, carried him on their shoulders to hospital, where he lay unconscious for several days, the others having died in the meantime. They bandaged all his wounds very carefully there, feeding him

through the nose or by means of a feeding cup; and under the patient care of the nurses and the kind treatment of the Supdt. he seemed to improve day by day, gaining consciousness after the seventh or the eighth day, I believe; later, on as this patient recovered sufficiently from the effects of the injuries he had received to be able to move about more or less as a sane man, in fairly good health, they set him free, out of compassion for his late sufferings, so that he went home amongst his people once more, though a criminal patient convicted of some very serious offence. Elya Goundan had to be kept handcuffed and locked-up ever since, as the law could not try a lunatic when he happened to commit any violence on any one in a fit of excitement. Though it was the practice in Port Blair to hang a criminal that had previously been convicted of having committed any murderous assault or murder, even for the very slightest offence of committing an assault a second time so that the man injured showed signs of bleeding; but not so with a lunatic, even though he managed to kill a man outright in his excitement. I have met with instances, both of a sane criminal being hanged for having inflicted

some slight injuries on another so that the man bled a little, as well as a lunatic going scot-free, even though he had killed a man most mercilessly with the help of a spade with which he was working in the gardens.

I have nearly done with all the mentionable incidents regarding my lunatic friends whom I had come across while I happened to pass my days as one amongst them. I shall add one or two more incidents regarding them, in which I had noticed some very strange peculiarities. There was a man, by name Poon-Swami, who, I noticed, could so control the action of the alimentary canal as to be able to bring out one by one morsels of food-stuffs that he had taken, just as he liked, giving them to crows and other birds to feed upon. The action resembles those of the cows and other animals of the cow class, who can take their fodder in a hurry first, and then ruminate at leisure, slowly getting the contents of their stomach out into their mouth and chewing them thoroughly for digestion. There was another man, a Mahomedan, who also had this peculiar control, but with this difference that whereas Poon Swami could get out his food from inside,

morsel by morsel, this man would do it all at a stretch, vomiting out the whole contents whenever he liked. He would drink water, ten to twelve pints at a stretch and then bend his body forward and stooping down his head quite low, would let out all the water, like the water that flows from the street tap, in a stream one or two inches thick. This seems to me to be but the same practice as the "Hata Yogis" are said to perform while engaged in their "Dhauti" or the internal cleaning process. The man happened to be of a very short stature but had a very stout-built constitution and knew well the art of Indian gymnastics and wrestling. But with all his praiseworthy accomplishments he was nothing better than a "K. D." i.e. a known desperado. As in our province "B Class" denotes criminals who have committed a crime more than once, so in Madras they call them "K. D.'s" or known desperadoes.

So much for the lunatics; I shall now revert to the supernatural once more and relate some very astounding stories that will startle my readers when they come to know of them.

XV.

One morning, as I happened to go near the big gate to our enclosure and only casually cast a glance at the outside, I seemed to see a lady standing in the outer garden attached to the residence of one of our European warders just in front of our enclosure. The lady suddenly took notice of me as I appeared at the gate and she looked as if she wanted to say something. She appeared to me of a rather stout built frame, almost what one might call fat, and her complexion seemed to show that she was more a European than an Indian, though she was dressed in Indian fashion, as far as I could judge from that distance. "Who's this"? she asked pointing to me; I stopped, but did not answer, as the question was not directly meant for me. "Do you know me?" she asked again, this time direct and not in the third person. I scrutinized her but she did not resemble any of my acquaintances so I felt rather undecided what to answer and stared at her in confusion. She seemed to realise my difficulty and came to my rescue by saying "I am She". Even then I could not understand her meaning and kept

quiet. Finding no way out at last she said "I am Mary, your queen." I looked up quite astonished and found to my surprise, that her figure resembled in many respects that of Queen Mary. But what on earth could be the meaning of such a strange meeting, under circumstances all so very strange and absurd? The European War was going on in full force at that time. I contrived to construct a meaning that appeared to suit the facts completely to my satisfaction. There must have arisen some very serious trouble in England as a result of this war, and the country might have been threatened with Civil War, so that, our Queen, finding it unsafe to remain in England, had chosen to come over to India, as a temporary refuge. Moreover she had clothed herself in Indian fashion, to complete her disguise, in accordance with the custom that obtains among the "Salvation Army" people. This change of dress sufficed so well to keep her identity a secret, that it seemed impossible that she should have been recognised as Her Imperial Majesty under those circumstances, even by her own courtiers, much less by people like ourselves who had never had any occasion to meet her. I had to

depend solely upon these conjectures, as I was not then allowed to read the papers, so that I was totally in the dark with regard to the progress of the War. My conjectures also seemed to fit the occasion, and naturally enough I believed the truth of what she said. And to be plain, it looked a matter of pity, even to me a rebellious subject of Her Majesty to find her in that condition, bereft of all her Regal attire, with only a plain cotton Dhoti and a cotton jacket or blouse to serve for wearing apparel, and not even a pair of shoes to cover her bare feet. "Why are you here?" She next asked me. I informed her that I was a prisoner transported for life, convicted under the charge of "waging war against the King." She seemed not to consider this any very serious offence on my part and said, "Oh, that's nothing; you are free." I did not understand the significance of an order of release, in this curious way, but instead of saying anything offered my heartfelt gratitude for her kind consideration towards me and, making a short bow, took leave of her and returned to my work.

Next follows an incident, no less strange and more interesting. It took place in the after-

noon one day. I was going to get a book from the library, as I was in the habit of doing now and again; there was a European soldier with me this time, who also wanted to go to the library, and a warder accompanied us both. The soldier was quite young, not more than twenty-two or twenty-three years old, and had been sent to the lunatic asylum, after he had been tried by the Madras High Court for having killed a barber, or a butler I cannot be quite definite, in a drunken state with his rifle. His name was John Scott. It is necessary for me to mention here that I happened to be entertaining a very strange and perverted notion at the time regarding this soldier. One day when I was working in one of the handlooms in the weaving shed, this soldier appeared before me. Thinking that he was desirous of learning the art of weaving, I asked him whether he should like to work there as we did. In answer he said "No; don't you know then that I am John?" From the manner in which he seemed to pronounce that name, it struck me as possible, after my late experience, that he might be "Prince John" himself! It seemed very likely that he had got himself implicated in a case of man-slaughter

or some such very serious offence in India, while out as a soldier returned from the War; or it might have been that he had come disguised to the lunatic asylum only to hide his real identity. If that was so, I thought, what work will he do? Though he told me some time afterwards some details regarding his home and family, but all that sounded quite hollow as compared to what he gave me to understand at first. He was only trying to conceal his identity, I thought, though he tried hard to prove that he was only a common soldier and not what I thought he was. Though my first impression regarding him was suggested merely by the name and nothing more, yet the effect proved so strong, that the individual himself appeared quite insufficient for the purpose of undoing what he had once said. As we came to the library, the clerk at the office told me that I was to see some one that day; I however did not very well understand what he meant, and did not even care to inquire, forgetting everything then and there.

The library room that was set apart for the use of the patients there happened to be a very decent hall pretty well furnished with books,

papers and magazines, so that the patients might get something to read whenever they liked. There were some indoor games also that the patients might play there for diversion and recreation. We used to meet on occasions of the New Year festivities and other entertainments that were given to the patients there, in order to cheer them up a bit. As I was running my eyes over the rows of books arranged in the almirah, in order to find one to my choice, and was waiting for the clerk to come and issue it, there entered a European gentleman whom, though I had never met him before, I took for some newly-arrived patient. His appearance, though not very striking at first glance, had something peculiar. He was tall, much taller than myself, but not fat, rather thin I should say from the height of his person, for he stood full six inches or more above the ordinary height. The cut of his face was oval and his dress was very simple. He had on an ordinary navy blue coat with not even a hat on his head, as if he had already made himself quite at home there. He too appeared to take notice of me, the very moment he stepped in and seemed to mutter to himself the words "Who's this?" as in the previous

instance. I did not, however, reply to his query, but there was another European gentleman there who undertook to do the talking on my behalf and told him every thing regarding me. Scott had by that time jumped upon the dais where there was a piano and was engaged in strenuous efforts at playing, striking at the keys most elegantly with the tip of his index finger alone, for fear perhaps, that if he made bold to use more fingers than one the result might be the reverse of music. Too many masters spoil the game, as the proverb says.

When our newly arrived gentleman came to learn that I was a political prisoner sentenced to transportation for life on the charge of waging war, he said: "I set you free. Do you know me?" I only cast a vacant look at his face and did not know what to make of his words. Noticing my discomfiture, he introduced himself to me saying, "I am George." In the meantime the clerk arrived and I went and gave him the number of the book that I wanted, on which he went to take out from the almirah. I noticed a European girl sitting on a table nearby, who also appeared to take notice of me and enquired of an old European patient, a doctor

once, who knew me well, "Who's this?; just as in the other two previous cases. This old doctor told the girl who I was and why I was there. On hearing this she requested him to introduce her to me. The doctor did accordingly, saying that she was "Princess Alice," King George's daughter. The introduction over, she began her childish blab with me, assuming that I was one of the staunchest advocates of Hinduism and its polytheistic doctrines and considering herself an opponent in faith, trying to make me believe in one God, in her own childish way, as her religious creed dictated. As if in strict obedience to her Christian instincts, it became her first duty, to try and convert me to her own faith making me leave my idolatrous Hindoo ways of worshipping many gods in place of one. She even went so far as to repeat to me a particular "Mantram" in Hindoostani, the first line, running this "Ekeshwar, badi Seeta" i.e., our "Seeta Devi was a convert already to her faith or must get converted, believing in one God, and that her challenge was sure to meet with the most signal success, so that there could be none that could dare to vindicate Polytheism against her, when

she had managed to win over the very highest of the Hindoo ideal characters, to side with her in her Christian faith. The first line, however, sounded very sweet and nice, in her foreign accents, but the next portion was too childish for me to repeat here. It appeared as if she had practiced repeating the "Mantram" in private; so queer seemed her gestures. When I gave her to understand that I was not an idolatrous Hindoo but a monotheistic Brahmo, like the unitarians in England, she came to realise her mistake and said, "Oh, is that so, then why do we quarrel at all? Why did you not tell me that before?" So ended our theological controversy and the clerk also had by that time taken out the book that I wanted, so that I prepared to leave the hall, in order to return to my enclosure.

As I approached the door, there stood the tall gentleman whom we had met once before and who accosted me a second time, saying "Do you know me?" Though he had said once before that he was George, I did not care to ascertain who this George might be. When he asked me again this time, I appeared even now not to understand his purpose and looking

rather blank at his face, answered that I did not know him. "Your King," was his most emphatic rejoinder, and he added something more that half escaped his lips, in the shape of an imprecation but he checked himself the moment his eyes met mine. How was I to believe that this was His Majesty himself, in person, standing and talking to me, when there was no distinguishing sign or emblem of Royalty to be seen about him? I doubt whether it would have been possible even for his own people to recognise him as King George, under the present circumstances, divested as he was of his regal robe and paraphernalia, aides-de-camps and guard of honour. No wonder that I failed to recognise him as such. When at last he came to understand that I was not ready to accept him as King George, even though he had told me so himself, his position seemed to appear very false indeed. In order to save himself from this awkward situation, he took recourse to some means that he thought would establish his identity beyond all doubt. He saw that I was taking a book from the library to read, and this put into his head the idea of getting a book from

the library himself, proving to us thereby his authority there. As he asked the clerk there for a book to read, the latter said, "How am I to give you a book? Who are you?" "How could you give me a book, you say! But whose books are all these, pray? Are they not mine?" was the reply. Still the clerk would not give way, and replied, "May be, they are yours in name, but meant exclusively for the use by the lunatic patients here, and not your private property; how am I to give them to you? Are you a patient yourself?" George had to admit that he was a patient, or else there was no chance of his getting a book. Accordingly, the clerk agreed at last to allow him to take a book suited to his choice.

The book that he selected appeared to be a very small neatly-bound copy with gilt edges, in a red morocco cover. As for the other particulars of this book, I could not be quite definite, but so far I know, that some time later, when I next went to the library, I could not help feeling a bit curious what book our Royal guest (?) had selected. As I was searching for it, and I knew its appearance having previously marked the colour and the size of the book, I

actually found one very similar in appearance, entitled "Kronstadt" which I took out and went through in order to satisfy my curiosity. The book happened to contain a description of the famous Russian Naval Fort, "Kronstadt", the biggest of its kind that Russia ever possessed.

Taking this book in his hand he began to turn the pages indifferently and asked, "Don't you believe me then?" that is to say, "Do you not believe that I am King George himself?" I nodded dissent. "What am I to do to make you believe?" was his almost pitiable exclamation, after what I had said and, as if to show me some token of Royalty, he appeared to rip open his chest, as Hanuman once did, to show the images of Rama and Sita enclosed within his breast. Instantly there appeared some shining little thing, a very fine golden chain that seemed to come out of the right side of his chest; this convinced me, and I believed actually that he was king George himself in person, connecting him with my previous impressions regarding the appearance of Queen Mary and others belonging to the Royal family, and bowed in obeisance. "I set you

free" said our visitor next, and watched the effect of his message on me. I, however, found myself in a very false and doubtful position, that is to say, if I accepted such a verbal order dictated to myself alone, and went away leaving the asylum for good, how were the asylum people to know that I did so, only under orders received from the very Supreme Head of the State? They would indeed get alarmed at my sudden disappearance, and set the whole of the Government vigilance machinery astir and running after me, till they brought me back from wherever I might be. A scandal and a disaster worse than this could not be imagined, and I had better be careful, I thought, and made answer saying "I am indeed very glad to hear such news, but there is a form for everything and in accordance with that, it does not seem quite enough to pass a verbal order only, and even that to myself alone and to no one else. A written order becomes necessary,—it looks quite plain, before it could be carried into action." To this he exclaimed, "What, a verbal order will not do? My word is law." "However that may be," I said, "there is a

way of doing things in official circles and I shall have nothing to say when the required form is observed." "Do you then want that I should give the order of release written and signed by myself in my own name?"—To this, I nodded, assent. He seemed not to see any way open to that, and did not know how to get himself out of this difficulty. My readers can very well guess from the manner in which I was talking, that I took him for the real earthly person himself and to me his very apparent difficulty in signing an order in material writing, had no meaning whatsoever and I asked for a written order without in the least suspecting anything amiss. He appeared to ponder over the matter for a while and then as if to see whether it was possible for him to do anything in the matter, by exercising his powers in the mental plane, so as to bring the matter directly to the notice of His Majesty in England, asked "Who are you?" "What are your credentials?" as if from a sub-conscious plane, but finding nothing very definite, such as could impress His Majesty's imagination from the sub-conscious or super-conscious regions, by weight of the gravity and importance of the question before

him, gave up the idea as something not quite feasible. He appeared then to try and make some fun with me for want of anything better and said, "All right if you want my signature, go and get me pen and ink and I shall sign the order." I took this apparent seriousness to be true and was about to move in order to bring what he wanted but found that we were both of us, held as fixed to our places by some unseen Power and I could not stir. I had had at length to give up the attempt as futile. He however consoled me with saying that once he had given his word, it could never fail to come true; but the only thing was that it would take some time before it got fulfilled; that was all. His next question was, "You seem to be a prisoner of war, but do you know the cause of England's joining in this present European War?" I asked him back the question in return, for him to answer, as I could not be very definite myself. The answer that he gave was simply funny and I could not help laughing. "She" was all he said, meaning his queen thereby. It was not his own intention to join at first, but it was Queen Mary that induced him to join, her home having been

Holland in early childhood, and Belgium her next door neighbour, she considered it her duty to come to the latter's assistance. The allegation sounded something quite like an Adam-and-Eve story; Adam accusing Eve, when taken to task by their Heavenly Father for having partaken of the fruit of the tree of knowledge; saying that it was no fault of his, as it was Eve only that induced him to do so.

As he was saying all this, he seemed suddenly to get startled at the sight of something untoward and exclaimed, "You see, a meteor is passing through my body." I really did not know whether to laugh at this fancy of his, or leave the matter there as something quite beyond our pale of reason. How could a meteor pass through his body while he was standing, not under the open sky, but inside the library hall? Moreover, as his body was only as big as that of a human being in all appearance, how could a big thing like a meteor, pass through it? It appeared quite absurd, but, when he was saying it, I just noticed a very small white point pass from one side of his body to the other. When he saw that we were not ready to believe what he said,

he asked, "Well, you don't seem to believe what I said just now? However, you will come to know of it by and by." Strange to say, that just a day or two later as I was sitting in my cell one night, I noticed suddenly a very peculiar kind of a meteor much bigger and brighter than those we generally see in the night, shoot past my cell at lightning speed, straight as an arrow, from north to south, just grazing the earth's atmosphere at a level not higher than that of a tree-top, as it seemed.

Our visitor seemed rather dissatisfied with the conversation he had with me so long and said, "I can't derive much satisfaction from this talk with you, because you are neither my equal in age nor in status; I shall, however, send to you one of your equals some day as my substitute. Then he said, "I shall take some one, but not you. You are an educated man and I could talk to you, but it must be some one else." So ended our conversation for the day and I came away to our enclosure with the book that I had selected to read. It seems worth of mention here that the night the meteor shot past my cell, a patient died, in the hospital, very suddenly and unexpectedly.

My readers know full well that during the occasions when the supernatural made their appearance before me, it had been my usual misfortune to mistake them as real and natural; but there occurred an incident very peculiar, just a few days after the Royal (?) visit mentioned above, so much so, that it sufficed, quite effectively to dispel thence forward all delusions from my mind regarding their ultimate character.

At about ten in the morning one day we were all assembled in the courtyard, close to the main gate to our enclosure, as it was just time for our mid-day meal. We were in all about fifty men, sitting in single file around three sides of the rectangular piece of ground attached to the guard-room. There were a table and a chair in the middle, meant for the European warder in charge of the guard room. I was sitting close to the gate and leaning against the wall. The head European warder sat on the chair, while the second looked after the distribution of food amongst the patients sitting in file. We had not been sitting long when something very curious attracted notice. A European entered our enclosure, who looked

exactly like our second European warder in every detail of dress and appearance. We all looked quite amazed at the sight of him and did not know what to make of the peculiar coincidence, a veritable comedy of errors in broad daylight and before so many assembled spectators. I have so far related not less than a dozen incidents of a supernatural character, but none of them like this. In all the previous cases the unearthly made its appearance only when the earthly happened to be absent or at a distance, so that there could be no evident grounds for us to see and know the "super earthly" as such. But in the present instance both the earthly and the unearthly met face to face at the same place and before so many people. This served, I must say, for the final disillusionment regarding the mysteries of the supernatural, on the earthly plane, so that there remained no doubt of the possibility of such appearances.

• As this unearthly visitor approached our head European warder's chair, the latter seemed at once to realise that he was not an earthly being and out of respect for the celestial, stood up, leaving his chair, and doffed his hat

with due ceremony; but for this, there could have been no reason for his leaving his chair and before one that appeared only as the second European warder, a subordinate officer. The celestial, however, appeared to assert his rights as a superior the moment he was recognised, and out came the query in authoritative tones, "All correct?" "All correct, Sir," was our head warder's humble reply.

Then the first sergeant asked him, "Why do you come here?" He said, "There must be something wrong." Then again the first sergeant inquired "Where do you come from?" He answered, "I come from the other world. I come from the planet Mars; you see, my world is a dream to you, and so is yours to me. I move in a world exactly similar to yours. I am also second sergeant in the lunatic asylum of my planet." While saying this, his eyes fell on the second sergeant, and at once he said, "You are here. How is it that you are here, while I am here?" Having said this, he began to cast a piercing look at the sergeant and we thought he was trying to enter the latter's body. As a result of his attempt we noticed that the body of the second sergeant

got contracted and stiff. The piercing look and the radiance coming out of that celestial body quite overpowered the one in human form.

• Though he remained standing, yet it seemed that he would have fainted, if matters continued as they were awhile. Then the celestial form said, "Have you got your scales ready? You can weigh me, if you like and you shall find that I weigh as much as that other man." Then he continued, "Have you got your camera ready? You could take my photo, if you have. Unfortunately, we were not prepared with those instruments from beforehand and so neither his weight nor his photo could be taken. At this, he seemed a bit sorry and remarked, "How is it that you have not kept those things ready? Did I not keep you previously informed of my coming?" Hearing this I was reminded of what had happened once before, how King George in celestial form had told me of this visit, but did not fix up the time nor place properly. Moreover even if he had, who knows whether I should have remembered it actually at the time of occurrence or not? Be that as it may, we admitted our fault and let him know, it was

not possible for us to get ready beforehand as the time and place were not known. Hardly was this conversation over when the end of his stay on earth drew near : he was hardly able to continue longer in his material 'mould and it seemed as if every atom of his body revolted against this forced confinement within the very limited space that his present figure allowed. At last every body present there was called in to ascertain whether his presence was visible. They unanimously admitted that it was so. After his work was finished, he walked out of the gate slowly, and, turning sideways disappeared like a storm in the atmosphere, jerking his hands and feet most violently once or twice. I saw everything quite clearly, as I happened to be sitting against the gate, though the others did not, having sat in such positions that they could not get a view of the outside.

After this event none need doubt the possibility of celestial bodies appearing on our earthly plane. There occurred only one more instance after that and the transcendental appearances ceased, so to say ; and never more did they appear in their seemingly material forms. But none the less I have felt the

presence of a sort of bubble images of a much finer and more evanescent mould, haunting me ever and anon, just as one finds oneself haunted by one's own shadow. Some permanent soft of a relation seems to have sprung up between us and it seems scarcely possible that we shall part very soon. Of these bubble forms, there are many belonging to persons living on the earthly plane, and some to those that have left their mortal remains on earth long, long ago or even recently. The wide gulf that separates the earthly from the unearthly, seems to have been bridged over by these intermediaries and I do not distinctly sense the distance between the living and the dead. What Ravana, the procrastinating Rakhsasha King of Lanka, could not accomplish in spite of his eager desire to construct the "Great Staircase" that was to lead earthly mortals direct to Heaven, has taken shape of itself in my mind and I seem to understand what that project of his meant.

• The last of all these supernatural incidents took place a few days later, and with it practically ended this chapter of my life. One morning we were told that the Superintendent was coming that very day to inspect our file.

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We accordingly stood in proper order under a tiled roof and waited. Shortly afterwards a company of European visitors arrived along with the Superintendent and went round the file, beginning at the furthest from me. They had not inspected half the row when some one suggested that one of the visitors was the Prince and another Sir Edward Carson. As I was just casting my eyes on them in order to satisfy my curiosity, I saw that their very complexion was charming. They had covered nearly half the length of the file so far, quite easily and without the least effort; but now came the rub. It was quite plain to me that they were panting for breath and could proceed no further. They seemed to get choked up by some unseen power, and there appeared in the shape of a column, a dense, heavy atmosphere from no body knew where; and for our visitors to wade through it appeared more or less an impossibility. They stopped and did not know whether to turn back or to proceed forward. The fun of it all was, that the whole situation appeared to depend on me, and me alone, for a solution. I felt quite sure, at the time that I was holding the key, and might

allow them to proceed if I liked, or disallow it, should I think proper. If I continued to stand as I did, without changing my pose one way or the other, I felt quite certain that they would get choked and be unable to proceed any further; but it proved rather too much for me to bear the sight of their helplessness and suffering, and I had to yield and let them pass, changing my pose for once and thus bringing to an end the deadlock in the distribution of forces. The moment I let go my hold, the expression on their very faces changed and they showed signs of cheerfulness and relaxation. They seemed to get new life all on a sudden and hurried past the lines in hot haste, as if it were altogether unsafe to linger there any more; the sooner they left this unwholesome spot, the better they thought, it would be for them all. They had not gone many paces ahead when something seemed to attract the attention of our so-called Prince; he stopped and called aloud, "Where are you?" It looked quite plain from his attitude that he was seeking some one not visible to us. "Who are you?" they asked him; and to this he answered, "I am Wales." From the introduction he gave of himself, we

inferred that he was searching for his father, whom I had met in the library once, and so he was assured that his father was stopping somewhere near and that he need not be anxious on his account.

To speak the truth, I really believed at that time, that King George himself had come to our asylum and was stopping some where within the Superintendent's bungalow. The uncertainties of a world war so covered the fallacies in my arguments regarding the possibility of such personages appearing in a lunatic asylum, that I actually believed they had done so. Our Prince next suggested that some one was pulling him by his hind-locks. "You see, the moon is pulling me," he said, pointing to the back of his head. It really seemed possible to us that some invisible force was attracting some of the hair on the back of his head. We, however, did not quite understand what was meant by those invisible agencies nor did we care. The party of visitors left after that, and our file dispersed.

Some time after this incident, I had a peculiar experience. It was a moon-lit night; all nature was flooded with the silver rays from

the Queen of Night. My room happened to be facing east, and the moon could be seen quite clearly from where I sat. It was quite in the early part of the night and I had sat nearly an hour enjoying the moon-light, when something very peculiar began to take place. It appeared to me as if the moon had begun to recede further and further away from my view, becoming smaller and smaller as she receded, till at last she disappeared altogether, and her disc was nowhere to be seen, although there resulted no appreciable diminution of the light. All else appeared exactly as before, only the disc of the moon was not to be seen. Moreover, as the moon began to disappear, I remember that I felt a sort of a pull within my inner consciousness, just as one would feel, if he were to see some tempting morsels of food placed before him when he was hungry and were taken away the moment he tried to lay his hands on them. The moon must have hidden itself behind a cloud, I thought, and I craned my neck in order to verify my assumption, but, lo! the sky was all clear, with not the slightest trace of any cloud in the horizon; I tried to draw the attention of the man in the next cell, in

order to learn from him, whether he had also noticed what was going on. He, however, did not think it wise of him perhaps, to say yea or nay to my questions and only smiled for once. Then I called back to memory, the celestial Prince-of-Wales incident, and my inference was, that our Prince experienced this very same phenomenon when he said that the moon was pulling him by his hind-locks. I tried to find out next, if it was possible for me to arrive at any reasonable scientific explanation of this curious occurrence. I thought that the moon must have grazed past the sphere of activity of some bigger and more powerful planet, while moving in space and my wonder and amazement knew no bounds. I tried to fix the time and the date of occurrence in my memory in order to verify my experience, in comparison with that of the outside world, relative to that particular night, and in the meantime our silver queen began to re-appear slowly and gradually, in just the same way that it had vanished. •

I consulted an astrologer friend of mine regarding this very incident just after I had obtained my release; but he failed to give me any satisfactory explanation and said that no

such thing had come to the notice of the astrologers. However, the question may be looked at from two different standpoints; firstly, that it was a hallucination resulting from my defective mental constitution, or secondly, our astrologers might have missed those few seconds for which period the moon was pulled out of view that night. If it is assumed that the incident was only but a hallucination and nothing lese, as in the case of a hypnotic subject, the question arises who could have been the operator in this business. We know full well that a hypnotic subject could be made to see hallucinations only when it is so suggested by the operator. Who could have been the operator here in my case? I seem to see none whatsoever. Now if we admit that it is possible for us to see hallucinations apparently for no reason of any kind, then I should say that the very basis of our phenomenal existence hangs on a very slender thread; indeed, I should like to cite here an instance that to my mind appears somewhat similar and may help us in forming an opinion regarding such phenomena. There is a famous religious temple dedicated to the Goddess Kali in Mohar,

a small village in the Chandpore subdivision of the Tippera District. The legendary history of the place traces its own origin to a great religious devotee from whom it acquired its present renown. The above Siddha Purusha happened to have been a very dull idiot in his early childhood it seems; and there runs a story very widely known in those parts that once on an *Amavasya* night when asked what was the phase of the moon that night, he answered straight and without the least hesitation, that it was a full-moon night and they all began to laugh and make fun of him. Stung by their taunts this apparently idiotic youth determined then and there that he must practise Yoga and acquire wisdom. He went to his preceptor accordingly and asked for advice. The preceptor seemed greatly moved by the youth's eagerness, and undertook to give him lessons that very night. He told his pupil that he was going to lie face downwards, underneath a tree, in "Shabasanam" i.e., the "dead-body pose", and that the pupil was to sit on the body of the preceptor, repeating a certain Mantram. The story goes that as they were going through

all those practices in the depth of the night, people saw a full moon begin to make its appearance in the sky, all to their astonishment and surprise. From that day forward, our idiotic youth began to be regarded as a holy personage and the place acquired its renown as one of the Siddha Peethas in India.

If it could be possible for the full moon to make its appearance on a no-moon night, no wonder that it should disappear on a full-moon night. Of course we have every right to question the authenticity of such miracles, but that is no reason why I should be asked to disbelieve what I saw with mine own eyes and in full possession of my senses. I would rather ask my astrologer and astronomer friends to investigate the matter in the light of their own science and see whether they might ascribe the incident to the nearer approach of some planetary body to the moon; a thing that they had never before calculated, and could not therefore have foreseen. I have now come to the end of all my prison experiences, super-natural as well as natural, as the time for my final release began to draw near and I had soon to leave for my native home.

XVII.

However, the few months just preceding the announcement of the very happy tidings of my release turned out the most tedious and the most gloomy that I can ever recall to memory. At the end of almost an age—long twelve years of penal servitude, I seemed to feel that I had spent whatever storage of life energy I had with me while entering the prison walls, even to the very last dregs, in order to conquer fate, in this most highly contested battle of life. I found myself a total wreck, in every way, with the candle of life burning so low, that it could not hold out for very long against odds, unless succour came very soon from somewhere and in some form or other. Failing this chance-relief from some unexpected region, I knew that there lay eight more long years for me to do and as for that, my chances were indeed very small, not to say nil. Those eight years it seemed had spread out their sable veil encompassing me from all directions in an ever-thickenning shade; to catch through it a glimpse of the future was no easy job for one, spent up and stranded as I found myself there. Unless


"this shroud lifted of itself, I knew my fate was sealed and I should have to leave earthly remains, somewhere there only, some day or other. I had almost prepared myself for the worst and ceased to care much for what fate should bring, when by chance I happened to meet a European patient in the library room one day and there appeared a faint ray of hope that a happier ending might be in store. "Hallo, Mr. Dutt, how is it that you have not been released, while all your fellow convicts have been?" This was what the European patient asked me. Was that true? I thought or was it that the old man was only trying to make fun of me? "Are you sure that they have been released?" I asked him in return. "Yes" he said, "I know for certain." "How did you come to know all that?" I asked him again. To this he said that it was all out in the papers. "Indeed! could you show me the paper?" I asked, just to make sure. This time the old man hesitated, but said "I know you are not allowed to read the papers, I am sorry I can't show you the paper itself, but you can take it from me that they have been released on account of the peace celebrations. "If that

be so", I told him, "why should I not be released? I must see the Superintendent about it." After this conversation in the library, I came away and waited for an opportunity to meet the Superintendent. Next morning when he came on his rounds to our enclosure, I approached him and inquired of the amnesty news and also the reason, why I was not being released, while all my other fellow case-men had obtained their release. This Superintendent, Mr. McCauly Hays, was a very kind old gentleman and took a great interest in me. He agreed to write immediately to the Government about it and said that there was no reason why they should not release me, if they had released others. He found that I did my work regularly and also that I was well behaved in every way; there was nothing in his opinion that could be found against me, as far as he had seen of me, and so on and so on. He gave me an assurance that he would be able to give me news regarding my release within a fortnight or so and consoled me with whatever friendly advice he thought was proper for him to give. From that day forward I began to be looking for some happy turn of fate in the near future.

breathing much more freely, as the dead weight of a dull stagnant life of imprisonment with no signs or prospects of a speedy change, lifted some what, in anticipation of my release. Not many days passed before our anticipations came true, and the order of release arrived. I was given to understand that I was to start for Calcutta within two days more. It was some seven years ago that I had come to Madras, I thought, but never within this long, long period did I get a chance to stir outside the four walls of our asylum what should I say to people when they asked me what sort of a town Madras was and what its most prominent features, were, and so on? I must get permission from the Superintendent for an outing before leaving Madras and see all that is worth seeing there; so thinking I met and asked the Superintendent and obtained his permission to go and have a look at the town and its chief sights. Accordingly, we were allowed the use of the bullock-driven asylum-bus and a European warder to accompany us with some four or five other lunatic patients from the asylum. The very first thing that we went to see was the local Museum, which, I found, was much smaller than the

one we have in Calcutta. It did not contain many things worth mention. There were Ravi Varma pictures that we found, were hung in the art gallery, some of which were indeed very nice. Among other finer handiworks there were some pith-works, that showed great skill in their workmanship, as well as an indication of the extreme patience and assiduity with which the Madrasis could stick to such laborious, little nothings. We next went to see the Bioscope. The Elphinstone Bioscope Company had arranged some time ago a free show of their moving pictures, for the lunatic patients from our asylum and so we had not to pay anything for our tickets, when we entered their theatre. At dusk we returned, and next day at about 2 o'clock or half past two in the evening I had to start on my journey home-wards, taking leave of my lunatic friends and the asylum staff as I left. One European Warder and two policemen accompanied me right up to Calcutta. It will be interesting here to note, that ever since my parents came to visit me at Madras, I seemed to feel their constant presence both mental as well as physical (?) near me. I had seen them many a time in visible material

form, even after they had left Madras, and so most naturally enough inferred that they were all in Madras only. It had not as yet become possible for me to realise this simple fact that "time" and "space" for the spirit world and the mental doubles, were as good as nought and did not stand in their way in the same way as they do, with regard to us, mortals of this physical plane. When our train left the station platform, I began to feel very uneasy about my parents, who were in Madras (at least so I thought at the time). Unless they came to know of my departure for Calcutta, how were they to accompany me? Where was I to board and lodge unless I found them in Calcutta? I seemed to find no way out of this difficulty and decided at last to ask the European Warder himself where he was going to leave me in Calcutta. "Why?" he said, "I shall leave you with your parents there." "How would you do that?" I asked. "My parents are not in Calcutta, they are in Madras." "No, they are in Calcutta, you are making a mistake. Our Superintendent received your father's letter the other day, enquiring about your health; we have got your father's address at the office,"



was his answer. It did not, however, seem advisable on my part to question him any more on that point and so I thought it better to wait and see how things turned out at the end.

On the third day the Madras mail reached Howrah Station and we got down on the platform, looking eagerly for any one that might have come to receive me there. I marked one out, that I knew twelve years ago, a relative of mine, and called out; but he seemed not to recognize me in my European costume, not having seen me for over twelve good long years. I had at last to give up the thought of his company, and had to take the lead myself, in guiding our warder and the policemen through the streets of Calcutta, as they were only new to the place. The European Warder, Mr. Jacobs, was a Christian and was always very friendly with me. He told me that he would leave me at the Alipore Jail, from where I was first transported and my people were to come and take me out from there. I agreed to what Mr. Jacob said, and led them past the Howrah Station, crossing over to Calcutta side, by means of the bridge walking with my bundle of clothes in one hand, till we came to the trainway

line. As soon as a car came near, we got in all four of us and took tickets for Kidderpore, according to my old notions regarding the site of the Alipore Jail. As the Kidderpore tram stopped at the Bridge, we got down and began to proceed in the direction of the old Alipore Jail. As we came by the side of the above Jail and saw "Presidency Jail" written there, in big raised characters, my readers can well imagine how complete was my bewilderment! So long I had been thinking that I was to be relieved at last of all magic and the super-natural that had haunted my memory so far and breathe the breath of life in a land of reality once more. But lo! this magic seemed to follow me here too and would not leave me alone. How could a big jail such as that of the Alipore Jail have changed its name outright, all on a sudden and become the Presidency Jail, unless it were by magic? My companions finding me so non-plussed, and hesitant, seemed to think that I did not at all know the whereabouts of the Alipore Jail, and was only giving them trouble for nothing; they would believe in my pretensions no more, and began to find their way out them-

selves. They went accordingly to the Jail gate, themselves and asked the people there how they might go to the Alipore Jail. The man told them what they wanted and also, that the old Presidency Jail had changed places with the old Alipore Jail, so that it became clear now to me that after all I was moving in the world of reality and not in that of magic.

XVIII.

As we reached our destination at last, the European Warder handed over the charge of me to the Jailor there and came away. I was shown a room where I was to put up for the night and as I went past the inner court-yards, leading to my cell, I marked what a transformation our old Presidency Jail had undergone within the last few years. I was scarcely able to believe that this could be the very same old Jail; so many were the changes and alterations made before it came to be the present Alipore Jail. I managed, however, to lie down on a bed somehow till it should be morning next day, eagerly awaiting my time, when I should be able to move about the streets of Calcutta, even

as a free man once more after all these years of soul-killing servitude. Once more day broke and the Jail was astir, the morning "conjee" came, but I did not care to take it, though offered. My mind was just passing through a state of agitation now hoping, now in despair; I stirred myself up at the least sound of footsteps and peeped out, thinking that they were coming to take me out, but no such news was forthcoming. Seven o'clock and yet no one came; 8 o'clock and some one seemed to be approaching my cell. I got up from my bed and looked about, but lo! it was only a European Warder that came with my morning grab. This time it was not that ordinary "conjee" as of old—so well cartooned in Hemda's jail caricature song—but quite a first class repast, bread, butter, sherbat, almonds, nuts, plantains and what not. It really made me laugh, considering the very radical change that the attitude of the Government had undergone towards us politicals, within the last twelve years. I did not however say anything there to that effect and fell to, in right earnest, doing all the justice I could to our well meaning host's hospitality. I

asked the European Warder when they were going to let me out. He told me that they had sent word to my people regarding my arrival at the Alipore Jail, and by evening they were sure to come and take me away. So far so good; and I thanked the warder for this most hopeful piece of news and he went away. The mid-day meal also showed signs of an unexpected change for the better; the dish and cups were filled with quite a variety of vegetable and other preparations, cooked in home fashion and not like the ordinary hotel things as of old. I came to learn from the man that brought my grub, that there were certain other political prisoners also, confined in jail at that time, for whom this special arrangement had been made, so that, it turned out to be my good fortune to get the very same treatment that was theirs.

As I was taking a little rest after my mid-day meal, news came and I was taken to the gate. There the very first thing that came to my notice was the unexpected presence of my revered father and the change that age had wrought on him in the course of the last few years. This was the last blow dealt at the

delusional misconceptions that had haunted me even up to the very last moments, preceding my final release and, comparing the delusional image of my father that I used to see while in Madras with the one that I saw at the gate, what a difference! The delusional appeared dressed in European costume, quite a robust figure with scarcely any signs of age visible in him, though he was already over seventy, whereas the earthly image had grown quite old in every way with nothing of the European about him. What a farce it all appeared to me now, and the relief I felt coming back to my own element from the folds of an overlapping dream in material garb that totally upset for a time all my previous notions, as by magic! It is not necessary for me to describe in detail the various scenes that followed, father holding son in warm embrace, the very scapegrace child of his, that had given him no end of trouble ever since arrest and trial. After I had done Pronam (Indian form of obeisance to one's superiors) I was told, that mother was also waiting for me outside in a gharry; so we had better hurry up instead of wasting time in unnecessary talk at the gate, which we shall find time enough to do

at home. My father signed his name in the visitors' book, as requested, and we came out, meeting mother in the gharry and doing Pronam to her as we met.

